

# THE NATION

## AND ATHENÆUM

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SATURDAY, APRIL 6th, 1929.

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### NINEPENCE FOR NOTHING

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THE AGE OF MARRIAGE ... .. EVA M. HUBBACK

ELEUTHERA ... .. STELLA BENSON

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**FORTUNE.** Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.  
**GAIETY.** Tues. & Fri., 2.30  
**GARRICK.** Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.  
**HIPPODROME.** Weds., Thurs., Sats., 2.30.

"MR. CINDERS."  
 "LITTLE ACCIDENT."  
 THE NEW MOON.  
 THE CHINESE BUNGALOW.  
 AREN'T WE ALL?  
 "LOVE LIES."  
 "THE LADY WITH A LAMP."  
 "THE FIVE O'CLOCK GIRL."

**KINGSWAY.** Weds. & Sats., 2.30.  
**LONDON PAVILION.** Tues., Thurs., 2.30.  
**LYRIC,** Hammersmith. Wed. & Sat., 2.30.  
**ST. JAMES'S.** Wed. & Sat., 2.30.  
**SAVOY.** Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.  
**VAUDEVILLE.** Wed. & Sat., 2.30.  
**WINTER GARDEN.** Wed., Sat., 2.30.  
**WYNDHAM'S.** Wed. & Sat., 2.30.

"FASHION."  
 "WAKE UP AND DREAM."  
 THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.  
 "FAME."  
 JOURNEY'S END.  
 "THE PATSY."  
 FUNNY FACE.  
 MAJOR BARBARA.

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 HUGH WAKEFIELD and MARION LORNE.

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 Entertainers; Howard Rogers, Comedian.  
 April 11th, 12th and 13th. NORMA TALMADGE in "THE WOMAN DIS-  
 PUTED"; MARION DAVIES in "THE POLITIC FLAPPER"; Rio and  
 Santos, Argentine Eccentrics; Fredk. Yeomans, Baritone, etc.

## NEXT WEEK'S DIARY.

**MONDAY.** Vaudeville. "The Patsy." (Transfer.)  
 Golders Green. "Charivari."  
 Little. "Before Midnight."  
 Coliseum. Nikolska and Drosdoff, "Blood Stained  
 Gables," with Jeanne de Casalis.  
 Stoll's Picture Theatre. "Forgotten Faces," with  
 Clive Brook and William Powell and Shirley Mason  
 in "The Lost Heiress."  
**WEDNESDAY.** Empire. "The Mysterious Lady." (Film.)  
 His Majesty's. "Porgy." Presented by C. B.  
 Cochran.  
**THURSDAY.** Stoll's Picture Theatre. "The Woman Disputed,"  
 with Norma Talmadge. Also "The Politic Flapper."

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Vol. XLV.

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## EVENTS OF THE WEEK

**R**EALIZED Budget surpluses of any sort have been so rare a feature of Mr. Churchill's Chancellorship that when he shows one on paper it is perhaps ungracious to scrutinize it narrowly. But it is certain that the ostensible surplus for the financial year which has just closed will not bear close inspection. At the first glance, the figures of the surplus seem impressive, £18 millions odd. But of this sum, £14½ millions represents the provision which Mr. Churchill made in his Budget for the derating scheme, so that the surplus in excess of the Budget estimates is less than £4 millions. As against this, the Sinking Fund provision for the year turns out to be £7½ millions less than Mr. Churchill estimated. Until last year, the Sinking Fund provision (whatever it might be) was a definite charge upon the Budget; and if, owing to a rise in money rates, the interest charges on the Debt proved higher than had been anticipated, that was a factor making for a deficit. If this system still obtained, Mr. Churchill would be £3½ millions on the wrong side of his estimates for the year which has just closed. The appearance of £4 millions on the right side is certainly attributable to the device of the fixed total debt charge, which Mr. Churchill introduced last year, and which, of course, in no way affects the realities of the situation.

\* \* \*

The results of the financial year are, of course, satisfactory in the sense that a much worse showing had at one time appeared likely. Before Mr. Churchill's Budget had passed the House of Commons, so many holes had been knocked in it, starting with the

dropping of the duty on kerosene, that the expectation of a £14 million surplus had been reduced to one of less than £8 millions. The results thus work out better on balance by about £2½ millions than the expectation when the Budget was passed. The most remarkable feature of the revenue returns is the continued buoyancy of the Death Duties, which have brought in over £80 millions, £8 millions more than the Budget estimate, and £3 millions more than what had seemed the quite exceptional figure of 1927-8. We do not regard this as a reassuring feature. The high yield of the Death Duties just now is attributable, it is fairly clear, to the fact that we have reached a period of high mortality among those who accumulated large fortunes during the war. Fortunes have not been so easily made since, and, even though the present high Death Duty yields may continue for a few more years, we must expect a decline before very long. It would be a far more encouraging sign if income tax and super-tax displayed a similar buoyancy; but while the former has exceeded the estimate by a satisfactory margin, the latter has once more disappointed expectations, a fact which is doubtless to be explained by a growing recourse to methods of "tax avoidance."

\* \* \*

The shrinking of the Sinking Fund raises a nice question for Mr. Churchill in his forthcoming Budget. It looks as though the margin which he will have at his disposal will be useful, though none too large for an election Budget, and he will presumably be anxious to concentrate it all on popular tax remissions. But can he decently, in the light of what has happened this year, leave the Sinking Fund provision where his fixed



total Debt charge of £355 millions leaves it? Failing a reduction in interest rates, this will mean a Sinking Fund provision of less than £40 millions, over £10 millions less than is required to provide for the special sinking-funds attached to specific loans. The Unemployment Fund, meanwhile, continues to pile up debt. The increase last year was £8 millions. If this experience is repeated, the reduction of the State's unproductive capital liabilities will be only at the rate of £30 millions. Yet it is not three years since the Colwyn Committee urged the raising of the Sinking Fund to £75 millions. Mr. Churchill is not likely to be unduly swayed by considerations of financial austerity; but can he ignore them altogether?

Conformably to the undertaking given at the time of the "Royal Oak" case, the Admiralty have amended and recodified the regulations with regard to complaints. The new regulations establish an exceedingly cumbersome procedure which a just and equitable commanding officer could use for the redress of grievances, but which also give lamentable opportunities to a commanding officer who should be more anxious to stifle complaints than to redress them. In the first place, complaints must be made by single persons; no two or three seamen or junior officers may jointly petition for redress. This is a survival of the tradition that a collective complaint is in itself a conspiracy against discipline. In its operation, the rule will discourage complaints of any kind, for a seaman will hesitate to complain if he knows beforehand that his mates will not be allowed to support him. Secondly, while the complainant is allowed the assistance of an officer in stating his case, this officer is to be detailed by the captain; a rule that might be used to deprive the complainant of the assistance of an officer in whom he has confidence, such as the chaplain.

In the first instance, complaints are to be made orally. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the captain's decision, he may "respectfully ask that he may be allowed to make his complaint in writing," and the captain is bound to grant this request, after giving him twenty-four hours "to reconsider the matter." The written complaint is then to be forwarded by the captain to his next superior officer, with further right of appeal up to the Admiralty itself. It is unfortunate that a written complaint is forbidden in the first instance. Nothing more assists the investigation of a complaint than a written record of its subject. The brief notes which the ship's corporal takes of cases heard orally on the quarter-deck are not authentic records of anything but the bare fact that a man has been before the officer on duty, and that a decision has been given, in the manner noted. For petty disciplinary cases this is adequate; complaints are different. The existing procedure would give an unjust commanding officer an opportunity of poisoning the wells of investigation, by alleging that a written complaint differed from that first made orally. It is not to be supposed that the Admiralty have issued these regulations with the deliberate purpose of supporting injustice. The Board seem rather to have been animated by a venerable service tradition that it is better that grievances should be forgotten than that they should be ventilated; from which it follows that when complaints are made, the procedure of investigation ought to be slow and cumbersome.

The preliminary investigations of the "I'm Alone" case have proved that the man who lost his life when the schooner was sunk was a French citizen. Four

Governments, the American, British, Canadian, and French, are therefore interested. It is now alleged, but not proved, that the Master of the schooner has admitted that his vessel was continuously, and not, as he first stated, intermittently, chased. This is rather difficult to believe; and, even if it is true, it will not strengthen the American case. Great Britain and Canada have expressly refused to recognize the twelve-miles limit; it is extremely doubtful whether the doctrine of "hot pursuit" can be imported into the Liquor Convention; and it seems certain, in any event, that the "I'm Alone" was more than an hour's steaming from the shore when search was first attempted. An auxiliary topsail schooner cannot get from the Trinity Shoals to the Sabine Pass in sixty minutes. The United States judicial authorities have twice postponed the preliminary hearing of the charges against Captain Randall, which suggests that the legal advisers of the Customs authorities are having difficulties in preparing their case.

The Independent Labour Party's conference at Carlisle produced some very wide resolutions and a good deal of strong language. Speaking to a resolution deploring "repressive measures" in India, Mr. Fenner Brockway declared that unless Dominion status were granted by the end of the year, there would be a movement of revolt—"he hoped on non-violent lines." Mr. James, of Watford, suggested that complete self-government for India would mean the practical severance of the British connection, the dominance of a military and despotic caste, and "rivers, lakes, and seas of blood"; but he found only two supporters. A resolution condemning the Government's foreign policy led to an acrimonious discussion of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's actual past and possible future premiership, on the grounds of his support for "continuity" in foreign affairs. The greatest excitement arose from a resolution instructing all I.L.P. Members of Parliament to vote against all war credits. Mr. E. Shinwell, M.P., construed this as implying that a Labour Government must submit no Army or Navy Estimates, and informed the Conference that he should take a decision on this matter from his constituents—a declaration that moved the Conference to transports of wrath. Mr. Maxton, as Chairman, found himself in the unaccustomed position of pouring oil on troubled waters, seeing "a tremendous lot of difficulties and dangers," and asking whether "If I come to you at the next Conference and tell you that we have only half a dozen I.L.P. Members of Parliament left, would you call that courage or folly?"

The General Election campaign will soon be in full swing. Sir Herbert Samuel is touring the West Country next week. Mr. Lloyd George addresses a great meeting in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on April 12th. Parliament reassembles and Mr. Churchill opens his Budget on Monday, April 15th, and Mr. Baldwin, in deference to the wishes of his followers, who are alarmed by the Liberal headway, is to produce the Conservative election programme later in the same week, instead of waiting, as was originally intended, until he speaks in Bristol on April 25th. Meanwhile, an amusing controversy rages in the Tory newspapers. Lord Rothermere's papers insistently urge Mr. Baldwin to save the country from Socialism by approaching Mr. Lloyd George with proposals for a coalition, or, at least, for a pre-election compact. Lord Beaverbrook's papers press, equally strongly, for a constructive Conservative programme to set against the Liberal policy of national development. The TIMES has thrown open its columns



to a correspondence on "Policy and Panic," in which the unhappy Prime Minister is assured, alternately, by eminent and anonymous correspondents, that all is lost and that all is well; that the only danger to be feared by the Conservatives is apathy, or that their one enemy is panic.

M. Poincaré's hopes of building up a reliable working majority for his reconstructed Government are decidedly brighter as the result of the session which has just come to an end. The Radicals have thrown their whole weight against him; they have attacked him on carefully prepared ground of their own choosing; and they have been repulsed with loss. In selecting the Missionary Congregations Bills as the main field of attack, they had the immense advantage of being able to appeal to the anti-clerical sentiment which has its roots deep in French political life; yet they were soundly beaten. It may have been recognition of the practical advantage to France of the high respect in which the French missionary orders are held abroad—even by non-Catholics and non-Christians; it may have been a suspicion of factiousness in the tactics of the opposition; it may have been merely that the Chamber is wearying of continual Ministerial changes. The fact remains that M. Poincaré's majority held together. It is not yet completely reliable—on some other occasions it has dwindled to a dangerously narrow margin—and its solidity is likely to be severely tested in the near future, unless economic conditions improve; but there is no doubt that the end of the session finds M. Poincaré in a stronger position than he held when it opened.

The Nanking Government have very promptly accepted the challenge to their authority, and large bodies of troops are marching against Hankow. It was not to be expected that a Government established after years of civil war should immediately and automatically exercise an uncontested authority. The question that matters is whether this return of strife is the first symptom of a general revival of civil war, or merely an incident in the process of consolidating the authority of the Central Government. When the trouble first began there were signs that the malcontents in Wuhan would be supported elsewhere. The attitude of Canton was doubtful, and it looked as though the Nanking authorities would raise the southern provinces against them by imprisoning Li-Chai-sum; for whatever that gentleman's faults may be, he has been an able and conscientious governor. The attitude of the versatile Feng Yu Hsiang was equally uncertain. He was known to be hovering about with large armies under his command, and his professions of loyalty to Nanking were read with much scepticism.

So far, the outstanding feature of the situation has been that, as soon as Nanking decided to act in earnest, the forces of consolidation set themselves in motion. Canton declared for the Central Government. Feng appears to have been satisfied with a promise of the Governorship of the revolted district, when subdued. The result is that the Nanking armies are marching to assert the authority of a Chinese Government recognized from Manchuria to Canton. This is highly significant. The composition of Chinese public opinion would be hard to analyze; its existence, and its ability to influence the process of consolidation, are established facts. The campaign will cost the Central Government money they can ill spare, and delay the process of disbandment, but it looks like seating them more firmly in the saddle. They have undoubtedly gained prestige from their new commercial treaties with the Powers,

and from the settlement of the Tsinan incident with Japan by an agreement signed on March 28th, which excludes all question of apologies or punishment on either side.

The curtain has rung up on a new act in the cynical comedy of international administration in Tangier. The Convention of 1923 prohibited gaming-houses, and in 1925 the two existing casinos were closed; but Italy was not a party to the Convention, and Italian subjects promptly set up gaming establishments, whereupon the casinos reopened. Italy having now adhered to the Convention, an order has been made for the closing of all these establishments. It occurred, however, to the Powers that a licensed casino, contributing to the revenues of Tangier, might be the means of meeting the expenses of Tangier's international bureaucracy without the necessity for grants-in-aid. The majority of the Powers jumped at this chance of writing off a contingent liability; but the Convention requires unanimity, and the scheme is held up by the veto of the Spanish Government, which considers that to make Tangier dependent for its revenue on gambling is inconsistent with the professed objects of the International Control. Most decent people will put this refusal on the credit side of the Spanish Dictatorship's balance sheet.

A treaty of "Friendship, Conciliation, and Judicial Settlement" has now been signed by the Greek and Yugoslav Governments. It follows in the main the lines of the "B" model provided by the League of Nations, but apparently contains some special provision by which disputes regarding "questions of territorial status" may be referred to an arbitral tribunal other than the League or the International Court. Its chief interest, of course, lies in its reactions on the general relations of the Balkan States. There is a tendency in Sofia to regard it as the first step to a *rapprochement* between Greece and Yugoslavia, aiming at the encirclement of Bulgaria. It has been suggested in Athens that the agreement is one capable of extension to all Balkan States, but there is no sign that this attitude is adopted at Belgrade, where the new Yugoslav dictatorship seems to be chiefly concerned with measures making for greater centralization of power.

The Registrar of Friendly Societies has issued his report on trade unions for the year 1927. The loss of union membership through the prolonged coal stoppage and the depression of the basic industries amounted to 300,000 in one year, and the funds of the unions were reduced by £4 millions to £8½ millions, the lowest figure recorded for any year since 1914. Nearly half the loss of membership occurred in the mining and quarrying unions, where a decrease of 140,000 is recorded. The metal group showed a decrease of 24,000, the General Engineering and Shipbuilding sections suffering most. The Locomotive Engineers and Firemen lost 14,000, the National Union of Railwaymen 11,000, and the Railway Clerks' Association 11,000.

From "The Londoner's Diary" in Wednesday's EVENING STANDARD, with reference to the Liberal proposals for reducing unemployment:—

"As a matter of fact, really searching criticism does not appear to be forthcoming at all. There have been objections on general grounds, but very little grappling with the details. Mr. Keynes's commendation of the policy in these pages attracted much attention. I learn that, following it, a member of the staff of the EVENING STANDARD spent several days trying to find prominent Conservatives who would reply to Mr. Keynes, but that he searched in vain."

## NINEPENCE FOR NOTHING

THE various critics of Mr. Lloyd George's unemployment pledge appear to be especially shocked by the financial part of it. Mr. Lloyd George has promised that the Liberal programme of capital expenditure will not entail any increase in rates or taxes. Mr. Baldwin says that this is like offering ninepence for nothing. Mr. Maxton calls it "a palpable lie." Mr. Ramsay MacDonald says that anyone who suggests that this is possible "is talking through his hat." The platform criticisms of politicians are not, of course, to be taken at their face value; but there seems no reason to doubt the sincerity of these expressions of scepticism. To Mr. Baldwin, to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and to many other people who have never considered the problem seriously, the suggestion that you can pour out money by the hundred million on public works without cost to the Exchequer seems a palpable and impudent imposture.

Now there is room, of course, for reasonable doubts as to whether Mr. Lloyd George's undertaking on this matter could be fulfilled to the letter. The reasoning on which the claim is founded is set out in "We Can Conquer Unemployment." Briefly, it is contended that the savings in unemployment pay and poor relief, and the increase in the revenue derived from existing taxes as the result of fuller employment, would be sufficient to defray the subsidies which would be necessary under such heads as housing and land drainage. This calculation is, no doubt, open to criticism in detail. It takes no account, for example, on the debit side, of a possible increase in the interest charges on the National Debt, a factor which we shall consider later in this article. On the other hand, we must remember that, in giving his pledge, Mr. Lloyd George has protected himself against the possibility that the development programme might entail some net financial loss to the State. Both in his speech to the Liberal candidates, and in his later speech at the Albert Hall, he has urged a reduction of expenditure on armaments as an integral part of the policy to which the pledge relates.

But the main point is that however the balance-sheet might work out in detail, there is certainly nothing fantastic in the claim that a large programme of capital expenditure should be virtually self-supporting as a financial proposition. The widespread incredulity on this matter illustrates the distorted perspective which eight years of large-scale unemployment have produced. Notoriously, unemployment is a most wasteful and costly thing. Yet many of us infer confusedly from this very fact that it must be immensely costly to get rid of it. Mr. Lloyd George at the Albert Hall has supplied the most effective retort to the "ninepence for nothing" argument:—

"Mr. Baldwin, trying to say something nasty, said our scheme was ninepence for nothing. His is ninepence for nothing. He is paying 75 millions a year and getting nothing in return."

The cost of unemployment is, indeed, no trifling matter, which it is reasonable to leave out of account in

considering the issue of capital expenditure. Week by week there is paid from the public funds to every unemployed man a sum of money representing from a quarter to a third of his wages when in work. How important this factor is can be seen perhaps most clearly in the case of those items in the Liberal programme which admittedly call for heavy subsidies. Take housing, for example, with which Mr. E. D. Simon deals in the article which follows. Reluctant though we may be to admit the idea—and, for our part, we have only admitted it with the greatest reluctance—it is clear, we think, that we have to reconcile ourselves to the social necessity of a large increase in housing subsidies. We have nearly overtaken the *general* post-war housing shortage. The road is now clear for an attack on the long-neglected problem of the slum. To attack that problem in earnest represents the most imperative obligation of social policy for our generation. In so many ways we have done so much to secure the minimum conditions of a civilized existence—in education, in the elimination of the grosser forms of sweating, in the provision against sickness, accident, unemployment, and the like. In housing, that most fundamental condition of a civilized existence, we have lagged sadly behind. The poorest sections of our population are still housed under conditions incompatible with decency, with health, with self-respect, with any real chance for the children brought up in them.

Now we cannot hope to attack the slum problem effectively unless we are ready to contemplate a large expenditure of public money. There is a big gulf to be bridged between the rents which slum-dwellers are accustomed to pay and the rents at which alternative houses can be built; and only public assistance can bridge it. No man has done more to emphasize this necessity than Mr. E. D. Simon. It is certainly no part of his case to minimize the expense of an adequate housing policy. In his recent book, "How to Abolish the Slums," he has worked out a scheme of public assistance, based on the principle of children's allowances, which he estimates would ultimately involve a charge of £12 millions annually on the Exchequer, and of £6 millions on the rates. But let the reader observe what a substantial set-off will be provided even in this case by the saving of unemployment benefit. Mr. Simon estimates it at £7½ millions, or over half the cost to the State. The increase in rateable value should largely defray the local authorities' share of the expense.

When we turn from housing to roads and bridges, electrical and telephone development, we have the saving of unemployment pay and no charge on the other side of the account. Why should a large road programme, financed by a Road Fund loan, impose any charge upon the taxpayer? There can be no reasonable doubt that the growing revenues of the Road Fund will be sufficient to defray both the service of the loan and the increased maintenance charges that would follow. Even if it were true, as some critics maintain, that no more road improvements are really needed, so that the expenditure would be essentially wasteful, this would



not mean that the general taxpayer would be burdened; it would mean merely that the motoring interests would get poor value for their money. It is certainly not the opinion of the motoring interests that further road improvements would be wasteful. There may be differences of opinion as to how fast it is practicable or prudent to proceed with road construction; but the case for holding that, on purely transport grounds, we ought to proceed far faster than at present is overwhelming. As for telephone development and electrical development, why should not these be financially remunerative?

But here we come to the questions which lie, we think, at the root of much of the scepticism that is prevalent. Can it really be that there is much public work of a remunerative character which is at present left undone? Why should even the present Government be reluctant to press forward vigorously with such work? The answer to the first question is Yes. The reason takes us straight to the real centre of the controversy.

Our whole economic policy during recent years has been dominated by the preoccupation of the Treasury with their departmental problem of debt conversion. The less the Government borrows, the better, they argue, are the chances of favourable conversion. In the interests of conversion, therefore, they exert themselves to curtail, as far as they can, all public borrowing, all capital expenditure by the State, no matter how productive and desirable in itself. We doubt if the general public has any idea how powerful, persistent, and far-reaching this influence has been.

Now the Treasury argument is sound enough within its departmental limits. It is quite true that curtailing capital expenditure exerts a tendency towards lower interest rates for Government loans. It is no less true that it makes for increased unemployment. The question is whether the game is worth the candle, even from the Budget point of view. It is difficult to believe that, if this question were considered squarely on its merits, any intelligent person could return an affirmative answer. The capital market is an international market. All sorts of influences which are outside our control go to determine the gilt-edged rate of interest; and the effect which the British Government can exert on it by curtailing or expanding its capital programme is limited. Suppose, which is putting the case extremely high, that the effect might be as much as  $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. This, applied to the £2,000 millions of War Loan, which are ripe for conversion, would represent a difference in the annual Debt charge of £5 millions annually. Compare this with the expenditure of the Unemployment Fund—over £50 millions last year.

We doubt very much if the question has ever been considered squarely on its merits. Unemployment is primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour. The National Debt charge is the special concern of the Treasury itself. We may suspect that the Treasury is not wholly immune from a departmental bias, which leads it to rate a saving under the latter head at more than its true value. Here we suggest we have one of the main reasons why our unemployment figures still rule so high.

## HOUSING AND UNEMPLOYMENT

THE Liberal unemployment proposals so far as they relate to housing have been characterized in a *TIMES* leader as "clearly and cruelly deceptive." So bitter an attack from so august a quarter seems to merit a reply, more especially as the proposals err, in my considered opinion, only by a too studious moderation. Whereas the Liberal scheme holds out the prospect of employing an additional 60,000 men on housing, I believe that in fact the Liberal housing proposals would mean the employment of no less than 150,000 more men than the Conservative policy.

In the first place, what is the Conservative policy? It will be remembered that from the end of the war up to 1924 rapid building was prevented by shortage of labour. In 1924 the Labour and Liberal Parties together carried through Parliament a fifteen-year housing programme, which included a moral guarantee to the building trade that if the numbers in the trade were increased the result would not be an increase in unemployment. Largely as a result of this Act we have built 800,000 houses during the past four years. The present Government have taken no action whatever (apart from their ordinary administrative duties) which has contributed towards the building of them. They can therefore claim no iota of credit for the success which has attended the efforts of the local authorities and the building industry, who during the year ending September 30th, 1927, actually completed no less than 212,000 subsidy houses. At that date Mr. Chamberlain took action for the first time; he reduced the subsidy. The result was electrical. The number of subsidy houses completed in the next year was only 101,000. Not content with cutting down the numbers built by more than one half, Mr. Chamberlain has taken action once more, again to cut the subsidy on September 30th of this year. This must inevitably cause a further disastrous reduction in subsidy house building.

Mr. Chamberlain seems to claim that if only he cuts the subsidy sufficiently often, prices will in some mysterious way be so much reduced that unsubsidized houses will become cheap enough for the working classes to live in. This is sheer nonsense. If we are to build houses without subsidies which the poorer sections of the working classes can afford to rent, it will be necessary to reduce the cost to much less than half the present level; every sensible person knows that this is utterly and wildly out of the question.

The Conservative policy of cutting subsidies can, therefore, only have one result: to increase the rents at which new houses can be let. A careful study of all the facts forces one to the conclusion that it must result in such a restriction of building that there will be no hope of getting more than about 100,000 houses built each year (the pre-war number), instead of the 165,000 for which the Liberal pamphlet gives the Conservatives credit.

The Liberal policy is to continue building 200,000 houses a year and to pay whatever subsidies are necessary for this purpose. The amount of these subsidies is not worked out in the Liberal Report; I estimate that to build two million houses during the next ten years, letting half of them at rents which the artisan can pay and a quarter of them at the low rent of 7s. or 8s. which the labourer's family can pay, would mean a burden on the national exchequer of about £12 million a year. On the other hand, it would employ an additional 150,000 men for the whole of that period, and the saving in unemployment benefit would therefore amount to about £7½ million per annum during the next ten years.



We have, therefore, two totally opposed policies for housing: the Conservative policy would build 100,000 houses a year; just about sufficient to meet the increase of population and to replace houses which have to be pulled down to meet the needs of industry or for other reasons. It would provide almost no houses to reduce the overcrowding in the slums or to allow for slum clearances; slum conditions would, in spite of whatever can be done by reconditioning, tend to get actually worse instead of better.

The Liberal policy, on the other hand, would provide in ten years a million houses to meet the needs of the slums alone. These would go a very long way both in the reduction of overcrowding and in clearing out a large proportion of the worst plague spots, at the same time providing continuous employment for an additional 150,000 men. During this ten-year period there would be a saving in unemployment benefit amounting to no less than £75 million. The cost of all these benefits would be a burden of about £12 million a year on the national exchequer at the end of ten years, and a further burden of about £6 million a year on the rates, which may be compared with the sum of £37 million a year actually accepted by Parliament for a similar programme in 1924.

It is no doubt quite possible to argue that the benefits of building a million houses to clear the slums and to employ 150,000 additional men for the next ten years do not justify the cost involved. This is a question on which the Liberal and Conservative Parties fundamentally differ. The decision as to which of these two policies the country will follow will have a profound effect on the life of the slum dweller, and on the amount of unemployment, during the next ten years. It is one of the most important questions which the voters will have to settle at the next election.

E. D. SIMON.

## THE SPANISH CRISIS AND ITS SEQUEL

MADRID, MARCH 24TH.

**J**UST a week ago as I write—on Sunday, March 17th—Madrid was stirred to its depths by the announcement that the "Central" University of Spain, that of the capital, was to be closed by authority until October, 1930, on account of the students' riots. This was no academic question. Thousands depend, wholly or partially, for their livelihood upon the University of Madrid, and the outlying schools which were to be closed together with it. At most, argued everyone, a few hundred students and half a dozen professors have been guilty of the dastardly crime of protesting against a questionable action of the Government. Possibly a few hundred more have committed the crime of looking on. Why should thousands of perfectly innocent professors, lecturers, clerks, porters, lodging-house keepers, and tradesmen be robbed of a part, or in some cases the whole, of their income?

Nor could anyone see—and the question was heatedly debated well into the early hours of the next morning—what in the world Primo de Rivera was aiming at. Clearly, he was afraid: that has been evident enough for some months. Presumably, he was afraid of the intellectuals: he would hardly need reminding that a students' strike in Portugal began the movement which ended the monarchy. But why, in that case, should he bring upon himself, instead of a temporary if noisily expressed unpopularity, the bitter and deep-seated enmity of the whole of the intellectuals of Spain, not confined to the capital as heretofore, but carefully disseminated throughout the country by no other a

person than himself, through the thousands of students whom he had sent to their homes in the provinces, bearing with them the legitimate grievance of a career ruined for a "rag"?

Thus argued Madrid: the intellectuals, the hotel-porters, and even the bootblacks. Never since the regime of the Dictatorship began has Madrid been so unanimous about anything. Fervent supporters of Primo de Rivera, from whom I have never heard a word of criticism in the past, for the first time reminded me that we had gone back a century in the night, that the tyrannous days of Ferdinand VII. were again with us, and that the Dictator was evidently determined to abolish once more *la funesta manía de pensar*.

Even Civil Servants, even workers in the Government's own departments, shook their heads at the monstrous decree, and expressed themselves with dangerous freedom. And, a day or two afterwards, there appeared a terse official notice to employees, fastened to the walls of every Government office, containing these words:—

"Whether you like it or not, the Government is your master. You may have your own opinion about it, if you think yourself capable of holding one. . . . But you are to abstain, rigorously, from criticizing its actions."

Could anything possibly be more significant?

Primo de Rivera has realized now that a week ago he went too far. On Monday, he blustered bravely, declared that 99 per cent. of public opinion was on his side, and threatened to out-Herod Herod by taking away certain privileges of women. On Tuesday, he said nothing, beyond printing some highly eulogistic accounts of himself which had appeared in foreign and Catholic papers. On Wednesday, it was whispered, and on Thursday, stated freely, that the Dictator had climbed down. The University was to be reopened in October, perhaps even in April. The loudly advertised Royal Commission was to be a farce. Everyone who had in any way been injured by the decree was to be indemnified.

These, after all, were only rumours. But Friday brought more solid tidings. The Royal Commission was indeed to be a farce. Of the eleven members to be appointed by the Government to judge the University, ten were to be professors of the University itself, and one a professor of Zaragoza University! Surely ridiculous legislation could hardly go farther!

On Saturday, the whole affair came to an inglorious close. In the National Assembly—that non-legislative, argumentative body meeting twice or three times a month in order to "advise" the Dictator—a long communication was read, signed by eleven professors lamenting and apologizing for all that happened, and giving it as their opinion that the great body of the University had been truly loyal. To these "noble words," as he termed them, the Minister of Education, Señor Callejo, added some touching words of forgiveness and a peroration which sent the easily moved Assembly into noisy applause.

And now, on Sunday, all is well again. The iron hand has resumed the velvet glove, and its wearer has departed to the North for a few days' respite. Since those days are the sacred days of Holy Week and Easter, it is to be presumed that nothing will happen in his absence. But will he find that the breach is really healed when he returns, or, having started to widen, is it continuing to do so, however imperceptibly? Liberal opinion declares that it is; Conservative opinion is wavering. I wonder. . . .

AN ENGLISHMAN IN MADRID.

## THE AGE OF MARRIAGE

**T**HE Bill which Lord Buckmaster has recently introduced and so eloquently defended in the House of Lords to raise the minimum age of marriage to sixteen, has now been referred to a Select Committee of that House, whence it is unlikely to emerge in time to pass into law this session. As, however, it is a measure which will probably be brought forward next year by any Government which is returned, it may be of interest to discuss the deficiencies in the present law and the ways in which the Bill attempts to meet them.

It is not always remembered that according to Common Law the present legal minimum marriage age in Great Britain is twelve for girls and fourteen for boys. In fixing this age, the English law had followed canon law (which, it is interesting to note, has recently been raised by two years in the case of each sex), the original assumption apparently having been that at these ages the sexes could respectively appreciate and fulfil the duties of marriage!

So low do these ages seem to our modern notions that it is not surprising that comparatively few marriages of children under the age of sixteen actually take place. In the last year for which figures are available, 1926, there were thirty-four girls and four boys of fifteen married, and four girls of fourteen. Cases have occurred, indeed, of marriages at an earlier age—Lord Buckmaster himself quoted one in which a girl of thirteen was married by a man who had assaulted her, the magistrate having himself suggested this on the grounds that if the man married her she would not be able to give evidence against him.

It is obvious that this gap in our law for the protection from themselves and from others of children under the age of sixteen should be closed. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, by raising the age of consent, protects both girls and boys up to sixteen. How much more important is it, until they have attained at least the age of consent, that what is considered a crime when there is no marriage should not be allowed to be made legal by marriage.

In many of the cases in which marriage is now sought for girls under the age of sixteen, it is on account of the law having been broken, and the girl having been made pregnant; there are those, both in the House of Lords and elsewhere, who are concerned at the fact that if she were not allowed to marry before she is sixteen, any baby born would be illegitimate. The general consensus of modern opinion, however, is even under these conditions most certainly in favour of not allowing girls of so young an age to take into their very immature hands the responsibility for their whole lives, and, when only children themselves, to undertake marriage with a man who has been guilty of a crime towards them. If they wish to marry the father of their child after they become sixteen the Legitimacy Act, which provides for the legitimation of a child after the marriage of its parents, should go a long way towards removing the doubts and scruples of those who feel it of such urgent importance that children should be born in wedlock.

But apart from our home problems, further and perhaps more cogent reasons arise for a change in the law when we consider our international responsibilities. In the Report of the League of Nations Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, it was pointed out that on the Continent "the low age of marriage may lead to abuse" by girls being persuaded to leave the country on promises of marriage. British representatives on that Committee would feel that their influence would be of more account if in any discussions which arose on the subject they had not to remember that this country is grouped with those which

have the lowest minimum marriage age in the world, including Poland, Venezuela, and Cuba. In India the recent revelations of Miss Mayo's book caused us to realize as never before the evils arising from child marriage, and our Government should be in a position to be able, with a clear conscience, to put its weight in favour of the effective raising of the age of marriage in that country.

The Bill, itself, is perhaps one of the simplest which has ever been presented to Parliament; it reads that "a marriage between persons either of whom is under the age of sixteen shall be void." The motion to refer the Bill to a Select Committee arose in connection with an amendment which was put forward by Lord Darling to leave out "void" and provide that either party to the marriage who is under sixteen can have the marriage voided at will. What the decision of the Committee will be, it is impossible to prejudge, but it is almost incredible that those who advocate that marriages under the age of sixteen should be only "voidable" should not realize that if they do so they will be emasculating the Bill to such an extent as to make it useless. A girl who has been bullied or shamed into marriage at the age of fifteen with a man who has seduced her is unlikely in the few months which are likely to elapse before she is sixteen, to dare to claim to have the marriage voided, so that the present situation would be virtually unchanged. Moreover, the temptation to lure a girl of fifteen or so into an experimental marriage on the understanding that it could be broken at will before she is sixteen would also have to be encountered.

EVA M. HUBBACK.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

**A**S a Conservative commentator remarked the other day, politics just now without Mr. Lloyd George would be as dull as Guy Fawkes day without the fireworks. He is our only dramatic politician. As a personality he can still play his rivals off the stage, and is in process of doing it at this crisis. As I listened to him at the Albert Hall last week, I could not help but be conscious of a certain danger to Liberalism in this extraordinary predominance of one man. I wish that so much had not, of necessity, to rest upon this one renowned orator, in the task of stirring the imagination of the multitude with the promise of the new Liberalism. In all the parties there is a dearth of personalities that mean anything to the mass of voters, and the peculiar nature of Mr. Lloyd George's extraordinary prestige, the fascination of his mastery of all the arts of advocacy, brings it about that the dependence upon one powerful voice is perhaps more marked in the Liberal Party than in the others. There is pride, but there is also anxiety, in the possession of an incomparable asset. No one will be so foolish as to accuse me of undervaluing the host of able and highly equipped men in the ranks of Liberalism, but in this age of multiple publicity the value of striking personalities, familiar and attractive to the vast electorate, is inestimable, and it is an affectation to think otherwise. Before people can be got to think they must somehow be got to listen. To return to the Albert Hall speech, I thought it most effective in its dramatization of a mass of fact and argument. It was all good ammunition for the campaign. The famous pledge—the happiest flight of reasoned audacity in post-war politics—was repeated, reinforced, and justified in the light of criticism, and as the speaker said, the promise is worth a good deal more now. He was speaking with two remarkable Liberal victories behind him; and while it is an easy game to make cheap or ponderous fun of Mr. Lloyd George, election figures are things that "winna ding."



The Tapers and Tadpoles of politics have been declaring with one voice that the Liberal Party has committed an error in tactics in the timing of the unemployment policy. It has been produced, one hears, a month or so too soon. These critics consider that the electorate as a whole possesses the "stunt" type of mind, the life of a stunt being from one issue of the *DAILY MAIL* to the next. The point is, of course, worthless. It would have been the extremity of folly to fling a vast scheme of the kind before the electors on the eve of the poll, without time being allowed for serious discussion, or even for it to be understood. The view taken of the political intelligence of the people is too cynical. The Conservative Tapers and Tadpoles were fond of contrasting the Liberal blunder with the cleverness of their Mr. Baldwin, in reserving the new Cabinet programme to the last moment before the dissolution, so that it should sweep the enraptured electors to the polls on his side before there was time for anything but gratitude. Mr. Baldwin's advisers have revised their plans. It has been brought home to them that the Liberals were less stupid than they had supposed. The Tory machine-minders have been told that the Liberal policy is making profitable progress in the country in the absence of competitors. Instead of reserving the dissolution programme to a fortnight or so before the dissolution, as had been arranged, it is now probable that Mr. Baldwin will announce the fruits of the anxious labours of the Cabinet policy committee in Budget week, or thereabouts. I have no news concerning this programme, and can only record the general expectation that it will attempt to eclipse the Liberal unemployment plan by "something permanent, especially with a view to helping the basic industries, which in their turn will absorb skilled workers now on the register." What this means I do not know: we must wait and see.

The Independent Labour Party has the advantage in Labour politics of having a simple and understandable position. They are Socialists. So, of course, are the Labour Party, but it is not much talked about. The I.L.P. talks about Socialism and means it; whereas the official party is not anxious for the bourgeois to overhear. At their conference this week the I.L.P. were comparatively subdued. Mr. Kirkwood, it is true, roared mighty things about repudiating the national debt, but nobody minds him. It was impossible even for that likable individualist Mr. Maxton—I mean that he shows all the independence of the individualist when he is requested to toe the line—it was impossible for him to be unconscious of the complete failure of "Socialism in our time" to capture the Trade Unions. They will have none of it, nor of the I.L.P., and the measure of the party's success in its intransigence is the fact that it has lost a quarter of its branches in the last two years. One would have thought that in these chilly circumstances the I.L.P. leaders would have seen the sense of Mr. Roden Buxton's advice to abandon the hopeless job of rivalry with the official party in the constituencies, and to concentrate upon the old job of Socialist propaganda. But the last thing that any politician, still less any body of politicians, will do is to admit a mistake, and the prospect seems to be that the I.L.P. will continue to hold high the banner of the ideal, in front of a dwindling procession marching defiantly down a side road.

Dr. F. B. Meyer was perhaps the best known figure in Nonconformity—certainly in London Nonconformity—since the days of Spurgeon and Parker. One thought of him as the embodiment of what used to be called, rather foolishly, the Nonconformist conscience. The Bishop of London is perhaps the best surviving exponent of the headlong Puritanism which the phrase expresses. Dr. Meyer,

the most sincere and well meaning of men, was certainly led by his zeal to attack "social evils" in ways that sometimes exposed him to telling criticism—not that he minded that. It is curious to reflect how utterly old-fashioned the "moral crusades" of the great days of militant Nonconformity have become. Nowadays the growth of humour and tolerance has made such exhibitions of self-confident zeal look a little foolish; at any rate, the courage to attempt them does not seem to flourish as in the days of Meyer's prime. There was never any doubt about the courage of this active and resourceful veteran. The quality of the man came out in his championship during the war of the rights of the conscientious objectors, which was persistent and successful, although he did not share their opinions—at least in the extreme form. When it became known that conscientious objectors, in spite of official assurances to the contrary, had been sent to France, Meyer went across to investigate the position of these men, some of whom were then awaiting sentence after court-martial. This visit brought to the resisters the knowledge that they were not utterly without friends, and it is probable that it had the effect of making the military authorities hesitate in their intention of "making an example" of them.

The conception of one's country as a sort of fortress, into which the "alien" is only to be admitted, if at all, after a suspicious scrutiny at the gates, is one of the unhappy legacies of war mentality. In this country our Home Secretary is a zealous if slightly ridiculous door-keeper, and, as everyone knows, he has his "opposite number" or numbers in Moscow, where they are as suspicious of the reactionary visitor as "Jix" is of the insinuating Bolshevik at the ports. This is a time when sensible people here are anxious for practical reasons as well as for those of general human friendliness to restore intercourse between Russia and this country. The restoration of intercourse is fully as much to Russia's advantage as it is to our own, yet we find that some stupid bureaucrat in Moscow is distinguishing himself by excluding from Russia the broad-minded Dean of Manchester, whom only a lunatic would suspect of political intentions. Dr. Hewlett Johnson wanted to spend his holidays in Russia looking round for himself at what Russia is doing in science and education. One can only assume that the hatred of religion, officially and actively displayed by the Russian Government, is allowed to prejudice them against any foreigner who is a cleric. It all seems very silly.

I was pleased this Easter to note during my limited exploration of London pleasure grounds—alternate occupation with book and spade was more to my liking—to note an improvement in the matter of litter. Of course, the holiday-makers are not altogether to blame. Litter is not easy to dispose of on the naked surface of Hampstead Heath, for instance, and the number of receptacles provided by the authorities is quite insufficient for the debris of a great crowd. Still, things are improving, and it is slowly penetrating the general consciousness that it is bad manners to leave a dirty visiting card on the doorstep of Nature—she is usually on these occasions "Not at home." No doubt the gentle homilies on the virtue of outdoor tidiness "on the wireless" have had a salutary effect. There is still plenty of room for improvements, and a friend who was misguided enough to visit the Zoo on Easter Monday informs me that the rubbish was as conspicuous there as the "wild" beasts. It is painful to read that up in the North the Duke of Devonshire has been driven to the threat of closing the beautiful park at Hardwick to the trippers owing to the wanton acts of destruction and defilement that



have been committed there by stupid and ill-mannered people.

Discoursing to a football team during the holidays, Mr. Baldwin remarked: "All this headwork is new since I used to play, so you can imagine how old-fashioned I am." Does this throw any light on the achievements of the Prime Minister in other fields?

KAPPA.

## NAKED—AND ASHAMED

**I** FRANKLY confess to a domestic difficulty. That is that the ultimate truth is always naked, and my friend the Home Secretary does not like you to look at her." Mr. Baldwin to the Foreign Press Association.

Titian painted a Venus, fair as a dream might be;  
Radiant, regal, and gracious—loveliness' self was she;  
But she hadn't a skirt or a jumper; frankly her raiment  
was nix—

So, "You mustn't look at the Venus," said the pious  
forbears of Jix.

Truth is a beautiful lady, whom many aspire to view;  
Shapely, shining, and stately—but alas! she is naked too;  
Bare of the frills and the trappings Dame Fancy wears  
for her tricks—

So, "If Truth should ever come near you, you must cover  
your eyes," says Jix.

Stanley has plotted a programme (though he cannot unfold  
it now)

To bring us peace and employment; but you mustn't ask  
when nor how;

For the more you press him for details, the more he wriggles  
and kicks;

Since "The truth is a little indecent," as Stanley  
whispered to Jix.

MACFLECKNOE.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### OBSCENITY IN LITERATURE

SIR,—May I support Professor Gilbert Murray against his critics? It requires no intensive perusal of modern criticism to see that much of it is permeated with the humbug that licentiousness is part of liberty. It has largely lost sight of the indestructible truth that in art as in politics and science liberty is inseparable from law.

Surely, too, he is right in thinking that sensualism, physical or mental, blinds its devotees to the finer elements of goodness, truth, and beauty. The modern world of art and criticism is suffering from a coarsening of its perceptions—the outcome, perhaps, of the prevailing cult of mechanism, organization, and the cruder sensual satisfactions. It is fearless enough in its exposure of the hypocrisies of traditional orthodoxy. But it has come to sympathize with much of the evil it pretends to deplore. It is uninterested in moral beauty, for it fails to see that the moral code is in essence liberation not repression. And as for the "beauty of holiness"—the world of spiritual truth and beauty into which the moral law is the only road of entry—it simply does not know what the phrase means.

Professor Gilbert Murray's letter, however, raises an even deeper issue. It is the prevailing fashion among intellectuals to maintain that art and morals have nothing to do with one another; to say that art is indifferent to good and evil. This thesis repeats in the æsthetic sphere the mistake of the Puritan divines, who thought that morals and religion were in a separate compartment from beauty and ugliness. The hideousness of Victorian morality is the product of the one error, just as the coarseness and lack of moral beauty of so much contemporary art and criticism is the product of the other.

Art and morality can ignore one another; but when they

do so neither approaches its noblest forms. The profoundest judges will never include a picture, however beautifully painted, which is sympathetic with moral evil, among the "immortal" works of art. The good, the beautiful, and the true are, in essence, emanations of the one reality, which is perfection. We approach perfection when we recognize and are inspired by all three; we move off into those phosphorescent quagmires of sensualism, phariseism, and cynicism which have decayed earlier civilizations, when we try to divorce them from one another.

It seems to me, therefore, that in principle a moral censorship is right. But such censorship should be exercised by the Courts and not by arbitrary executive power. The Irish Censorship Bill is the wrong way to control immoral literature, for it sets up a tyranny over the national thinking and the people have no means of knowing what it is doing or of controlling where the line of prohibition should be drawn. The appeal to the Courts is the right way because the line is drawn in public, so that if the Courts, in the public view, go wrong, Parliament can provide the remedy. —Yours, &c.,

PHILIP KERR.

## THE COSTS OF TRANSPORT

SIR,—The Balfour Committee's Report draws attention once again to the fact that railway carriage charges—which are 150 to 200 per cent. higher than abroad—are seriously affecting our competitive position in the markets of the world.

The excessive level of these charges is primarily due to the persistence in permitting private ownership in wagons, which creates a method of working that is fundamentally wrong, as one-half the wagons are always running in opposition to the other half—privately owned v. railway owned—and this duplicates the costs of operation. The result is that, whereas in other countries railway operating expenses and transport rates have gradually fallen (through increasing traffics over a long period of years) to much lower levels, British rates have always had to be kept up, or raised, in order to meet the cost of the ever-growing shunting, light mileage, and other heavy expenses incurred by the rapidly increasing numbers of private wagons. The natural advantage our manufacturers and the coal trade originally possessed over their foreign competitors, through short hauls and low ton-mile rates, has thus been taken from them.

The heavy savings that would ensue from the abolition of this absurdly stupid and enormously wasteful method of working, would enable the railways to embark upon a bold and progressive policy of a wholesale building of 20-ton and 40-ton wagons, which would make for a further economy of 50 and 75 per cent. respectively in operating expenses.

A popular objection advanced against these larger classes of wagons is that owing to traders having acquired the habit of ordering and dispatching traffic in small truck-loads, they are not suitable to our methods of trade. This habit, however, has undoubtedly been created by the colliery owners and railway companies themselves, as they have never yet given traders the opportunity to order in larger types of vehicles. Up to fifty years ago, the same custom prevailed in the United States and other countries. But when the American railways realized the heavy economies that would be attainable by employing bigger wagons, they built and popularized them by offering traders a substantial rebate on rates, with the result that the 10-ton truck has now almost completely disappeared from many foreign lines. From this period their methods of operating the goods train services began to diverge from and develop on different lines from the British.

The total traffic carried on our railways is, normally, 340,000,000 tons. Of this, some 280,000,000 tons consists of coal, iron-ore, roadstone, and other minerals, which would nearly all be carried to our ports, works, and scores of large towns in high-capacity wagons if these were available. Coal merchants and other traders at the smaller towns who now order, say, a daily or weekly 10-ton truck will (as occurred abroad), in future, order a 40-ton one every four days, or once a month, upon which they, also, will make a heavy saving through their rebate on rates.

Of the 60,000,000 tons of general merchandise, probably not more than 5 or 6 million tons pass through the goods sheds in the way of small consignments. The remainder is composed of heavy traffic, such as iron, steel, machinery, hay, grain, roots, timber, bricks, beer, &c., which is loaded and unloaded outside the sheds by traders themselves, and will likewise be carried largely in high-capacity wagons once these are placed at the disposition of the public.

At present, over 1,400,000 wagons are being employed on the railways. But if 20-ton wagons were used only 700,000 would be required—thus halving the costs of transportation. The thousands of goods and mineral trains which now crowd and congest the lines at night would also be reduced to half their present numbers, thereby minimizing the risk of collisions, &c., during shunting operations at stations.

In addition to substantially reducing the costs of railway transportation, the employment of 20-ton and 40-ton wagons would speed up the discharge of coal and turn-round of ships at the docks by 100 and 300 per cent. respectively, as one of these vehicles would be tipped in the same time as a 10-ton truck—thus eliminating the serious delays to vessels that occur at many of our ports, as compared with Continental—as well as cheapening tipping, dock, and shipping charges.—Yours, &c.,

E. R. B. ROBERTS,  
late of Traffic Department,  
Buenos Aires Great Southern Railway.  
25, Appach Road, Brixton, S.W.2.  
March 18th, 1929.

### MR. LLOYD GEORGE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

SIR,—During the period of "rationalization" of the mines in the Ruhr, Germany had 200,000 miners unemployed. Work was found for them on needed improvements of roads, bridges, water works, electric cables, and pipes to convey gas to towns miles away—all of them useful and ultimately remunerative jobs—and at the end of three years, which it took to amalgamate and reconstruct the mines, build coke ovens, to instal up-to-date machinery, and adopt scientific methods, almost all the 200,000 miners returned to their old employment.

What the Germans did might be done in England if brains and energy were available; whether Mr. Lloyd George can make good all his promises may be doubtful, but at any rate he is about our only "live wire," and he certainly did get things done during the war.

I agree with Mr. Charles Wright's letter in your issue of March 16th, and think it foolish to dismiss Mr. Lloyd George's schemes as impossible.—Yours, &c.,

E. H. KEEN.

Birkdale, 29, Sylvan Avenue,  
Mill Hill, N.W.7.

### MR. LLOYD GEORGE AND LORD NORTHCLIFFE

SIR,—I delayed writing again, in reply to your contributor's comment on my letter, until I could consult my notes and diaries.

Having done this, I feel able to assert that Mr. Lloyd George did not tell Lord Northcliffe to go to hell during any discussion as to Lord Northcliffe joining the Government or becoming a member of the Peace Delegation.

Had Mr. Lloyd George used this expression, so surprising on the lips of one respected by Free Churchmen as a pillar of Particular Baptistry, it is impossible, I think, that Lord Northcliffe should not have mentioned it.

When your contributor "Kappa" speaks of Lord Northcliffe's "impudence," he seems to overlook the fact that Mr. Lloyd George twice invited him to join the Cabinet, and that he also suggested the hiring of a house in Paris by Lord Northcliffe for the period of the Peace Conference, near to the house which he himself was to occupy.

What could this imply but that he wished Lord Northcliffe to take part in the Peace negotiations? He changed his mind, it is true, but to call Lord Northcliffe "impudent"

because he took Mr. Lloyd George at his word seems to me incorrect as well as unmannerly.

I have consulted others who were in close relation with Lord Northcliffe during this time. They are in agreement with what I have written.

Of course, if Mr. Lloyd George declares that he did use the words "Go to hell," we shall be bound to believe him. I shall still suppose, until he does so, that they were used figuratively in the DAILY NEWS article. I hope so—for the sake of Mr. Lloyd George's reputation with his Free Church friends.—Yours, &c.,

HAMILTON FYFE.

Bessel's Green, Sevenoaks.  
April 2nd, 1929.

### THE PROPOSED BATTERSEA ELECTRIC POWER STATION

SIR,—Your issue of the 30th contains a note by "Kappa" on the intended Battersea Electric Power Station. He gently points to the horrible effects of pouring the smoke from 2,000 tons of coal a day into the air at Battersea, and he supposes that this pollution is to be made because the current can be produced at Battersea "a fraction cheaper" than if the generators are elsewhere. But this is not the case; it will cost more to generate electricity in Battersea than at works ten or twenty miles East of London on the Thames. There is no excuse of any kind for putting this great station at Battersea. The current can be more cheaply generated at a station down the river, and delivered at Battersea and elsewhere at a less cost than if generated at Battersea. The Electricity Commissioners do not care for the amenities of London in the least, and do not mind the extra generating cost at Battersea.

About twenty-one or twenty-two years ago it was proposed to put this station at Battersea; it was referred to a Committee of the House of Commons. I was asked to give evidence, and proved that the electric current could be more cheaply produced at the coal-field (or down the river) and delivered in Battersea at a less cost. The Committee rejected the Battersea scheme, and so would any other competent tribunal. The Commissioners under the new Law (drafted by Mr. Philip Snowden in 1924 and forced through Parliament by Mr. Baldwin against the wishes of the Conservative engineers) are now showing the way in which they care for the public welfare, and the sixteen tall chimneys will be their perpetual monument. They say they will make no smoke? or dust? but there will be plenty of sulphur and carbonic acid.—Yours, &c.,

ARNOLD LUPTON.

7, Victoria Street, S.W.1.  
March 29th, 1929.

### ABBEY SACRISTY

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to an interesting paragraph in which on March 16th you comment on the question of the Westminster Abbey Sacristy. In it you make two remarkable statements which I cannot think you would have made without adequate grounds. First you say that you are "safe in refusing to accept the Dean's declaration" that all other schemes which have been put forward are impossible; and secondly you say that there are some of the Chapels in the Abbey which "could be made to serve." I am looking for the best possible scheme. I shall be very grateful, therefore, if you would do two things—first explain which of the schemes that have been proposed and that we have felt obliged to turn down is the one which you think really possible, and secondly which Chapel in the Abbey you consider suitable for our purpose. We may perhaps eliminate those Chapels which are full of monuments.—Yours, &c.,

W. FOXLEY NORRIS.

The Deanery, Westminster.  
March 27th, 1929.

"Kappa" writes: "I think the Dean of Westminster has rather missed the point of my paragraph. I was not concerned to question the view that the proposed new Sacristy would be the best solution of the problem from the



standpoint of convenience. No doubt it would be more convenient as a robing-room for the clergy than the present arrangement, and no doubt there are objections to the adoption of any of the alternative proposals. The point is whether it would not be better to put up with some inconvenience, either by continuing the present arrangement or by experimenting with the use of some other part of the Abbey buildings, rather than to run counter to so powerful a body of æsthetic and architectural opinion with which I, as a layman, agree. If it is a question of two evils, my contention is that to afflict the Abbey with a piece of modern make-believe Gothic is very much the greater of the two. In short, I continue to decline to believe that a new Sacristy is so overwhelmingly necessary as to justify the objectionable addition that is proposed."]

### BETTING AND GAMBLING

SIR,—Believing that the gambling habit is a menace alike to individual character and happiness and to national well-being, we desire to draw attention to the dangers with which this habit threatens our common life.

The peculiar fascination and excitement of gambling rapidly become an unhealthy absorption claiming the time, interest, and energy which should be directed to more worthy and fruitful ends. Resources which should be building up and enriching the community intellectually, morally, and economically are being thrown to waste. Thus the common life is inevitably impoverished and progress is impeded. At no time, least of all in these days, can we afford the wastage of human resources involved in widespread gambling.

The habitual attempt to obtain possession of money without rendering value for it either in goods or service is destructive both of the independence and self-respect which are the backbone of individual character and also of the sense of obligation which is the cement of communal life. That the members of a community should recognize the obligation to serve with hand or brain for their share in the common wealth is equally essential to true manliness and honour and to the sturdiness and vigour of a nation. The constant preoccupation with the vision of "something for nothing" involved in gambling inevitably weakens the fibre of individual character and the fabric of society.

To the young the fascination of gambling is especially dangerous. The effort of education to build up character and stimulate wide interests is too often thwarted by the opportunities and incitements to bet which meet young people on every hand. At a period when they should be developing habits of concentration and steady purposive work and adding to their intellectual equipment, the absorbing excitement of gambling too easily masters them, unsteading the emotions, weakening the will and occupying the attention to the displacement of worthier interests.

Finally, we hold that gambling weakens the sense of responsibility in the handling of money. A wise and productive use of money is of the greatest importance to a nation. A habit which encourages the foolish and haphazard use of wealth destroys those qualities of thrift and foresight on which national prosperity is built.

We believe that the dangers to which we have pointed are inherent in all gambling and no methods of regulating the pursuit can eliminate them, whatever other evils may be removed.

It may be urged that gambling is the expression of a love of adventure and risk from which the noblest achievements of the race have sprung. We hold that it is the *perverted* expression of a natural instinct. The deeds of daring and adventure which command our admiration are those undertaken for worthy ends and carried out not only with courage but intelligence. There is no kinship between these and the blind trust in chance. It is, however, in the dullness and monotony of life for many that gambling often finds its root. Opportunities for the wholesome use of leisure must be afforded for all. We cannot stress too strongly the importance of providing more parks and open spaces where young people may themselves play the games of which at present they are performance spectators. Equally we would emphasize the value of those organizations which encourage a wide range of interests, hobbies, and pursuits. We call on

our fellow-citizens not only to discourage the gambling habit by influence and example, but also to unite in the effort to provide for all the means of healthy sport and recreation and conditions of life less drab and burdensome.—Yours, &c.,

THEODORE WINTON.

J. H. HERTZ, Chief Rabbi.

ERNEST BARKER.

MARGARET G. BONDFIELD.

ARTHUR HENDERSON.

W. W. HILL, President, National Union of Teachers.

GILBERT MURRAY.

CYRIL NORWOOD, Harrow.

B. SEEBOHM ROWNTREE.

WALTER RUNCIMAN.

ANGUS WATSON.

ARTHUR S. PEAKE, Honorary Secretary.

### "THE JEREMIAH IN OUR MIDST"

SIR,—Perhaps you will kindly let me reply briefly to the charge—based upon a slight misunderstanding—of having used "very misleading figures" in my recent book "Woman and Society," reviewed in your columns on March 30th?

The figures in question were those relating to infant deaths due to congenital defects, and your reviewer seems to have thought that I was using these in order to suggest that infant mortality as a whole had increased. It never occurred to me that anyone would misunderstand the matter. I took it for granted that all my readers would be aware of the decrease in general infant mortality. Dr. Manschke (writing in "Population and Birth-Control") picked out these figures in order to show that while infant mortality as a whole had decreased, this particular kind of mortality (which depends upon maternal unfitness of one sort or another) had increased greatly, and he drew the conclusion that while hygiene had done much to save children after birth, there was a widespread unfitness for maternity amongst women in civilized communities. The general infantile death-rate does not throw much light, if any, upon this problem. Babies who are perfectly strong may die like flies through infected milk. But if babies are born congenitally defective that is quite another matter.

Miss Vera Brittain also challenges the accuracy of my maternal mortality figures (while herself quoting them incorrectly!). I have checked them against their source (the official report "On the State of the Public Health," by Sir George Newman, 1926, page 149), and find them correct. What your reviewer means by saying that I regard men as individuals and women as a class I simply cannot imagine. The sentence she then quotes, as if from my book, was not written by me, but was quoted *with disapprobation* from an article written by a woman journalist, as the reviewer must have seen if she had read this chapter with any care at all.

I scarcely think the readers of THE NATION, who represent a very intelligent section of opinion, will allow the modern psychological approach to vital social problems to be discredited merely by a reviewer remarking that it is impertinent for men to write about women! Was John Stuart Mill's book an impertinence? I daresay the developments of psychology following upon Freud are not welcome to feminists. But they are not to be disposed of quite so cheaply as this! I think a little solid argument will be needed.—Yours, &c.,

MEYRICK BOOTH.

61, Broadwater Avenue, Letchworth, Herts.

April 1st, 1929.

### ITALIAN REFUGEES IN PARIS

SIR,—The bitter weather of the last two months has added substantially to the sufferings of those Italian exiles, existing for the most part on pitifully small means in Paris, where rent, firing and food are all expensive. Our Italian Refugees Relief Committee is almost at an end of its resources, and from our admirable Italian visitor in Paris we receive pathetic accounts of poverty and suffering, showing the urgent need of more, and not less, help in the immediate future. Many of the refugees are ill, their health weakened by poor living and the long strain of anxiety,



others are temporarily out of work, and one or two have families of six and seven children to support.

From funds previously entrusted to us a Christmas gift of groceries was made to ten approved families, and a special grant was sent early in the winter to be spent on children's boots. Clothes, too, both for children and adults, have been collected and distributed. Beyond this the plan followed by the Committee has been to disburse small regular sums to families whose available resources, owing to ill-health or other causes are below any decent subsistence level. At present, for this purpose, we only had money in hand for our March payments. And now, our visitor writes that fresh cases, recently escaped from Italy, present themselves not infrequently at her house, literally famished and with no money even for a tram fare, and that she cannot send them hungry from her door. And she begs for a somewhat larger grant so that some of these newcomers may be helped through their worst privations. Yet, unless new friends come to our assistance and old friends are good enough to repeat their generous gifts of the past, our practical sympathy for these unhappy exiles must soon come to an end. And the exiles we are helping, it must be remembered, are nearly all professional men, who had a certain social standing at home, and for whom their present plight, without home, or country, or regular means of subsistence, is peculiarly hard.—Yours, &c.,

V. M. CRAWFORD, Vice-Chairman,  
W. S. KENNEDY, Hon. Secretary,  
Italian R. R. Committee.

## CRAFTSMANSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES

SIR,—The American readers of THE NATION are necessarily somewhat slow in offering their comments upon the articles and letters that particularly stir them to such comment, because of the water that must twice be crossed in the interval. One American reader often thinks, with a slightly rueful smile, that this is as well. We are, I believe, rightly accused of a most sensitive vanity, and sometimes this is prodded by our nearest of kin in England. So it is not altogether to be regretted that the winds and waves of the Atlantic (or the thought of them) should so often carry and wash away the complaints we might make in reply, some of which might be just, others merely absurd. But it is only causes inexcusable that have kept this reader from expressing her very great debt to the magazine for a more enlightened and liberal understanding of international politics than, without THE NATION, I should have come by, and for much delight in the literary and art criticism. When we were children, we wrote letters to our beloved "St. Nicholas," in which we invariably laid our youthful offerings upon our favourite altars: in the same spirit, I give particular thanks for Graham Wallas, "Kappa" (with whom I often disagree), the Woolfs, Raymond Mortimer, J. M. Keynes, Cecil Gray, Roger Fry, Masterman (the loss of whom I mourned), Saintsbury, and more—above all, for the truly generous and liberal tone of the editorials.

My sincere and cordial acknowledgements made, may I now tell you of my interest in "Kappa's" comment on young Ford's stone roofing, and his importation of an English slater to do the job properly for him? It happens that I was speaking of the danger to America, attending upon standardization, in loss of craftsmanship, a short time ago, at a dinner-table in Washington, but my fellow-diners tended to be 100-per-centers, and found it hard to believe that high wages were not preferable to joy in one's craft, or, in other words (according to the habit of 100-per-centers), that anything in America could conceivably be on the wrong track.

However, just as when one has rheumatism or appendicitis, one discovers that everybody else has, or has had, the same trouble, so being absorbed in one's own craft does undoubtedly lift the veil upon such love of good craftsmanship as remains stubbornly entrenched, even in men surrounded, as Americans are, by standardization. We have just finished the building of a house in an early French style, which we hope is not one of the "horrible imitations," but indeed a loving copy of the spirit, rather than the entire facts, of a French farm-house. (We have omitted the *fumier*.) The building of it has been such an interesting

experience that if the result is not a success as an architectural outcome, it has at least proved worth the trouble, in the pleasant sympathies it has brought to the surface. At first, the men only felt that they were being asked to lay the bricks as badly as possible, and to hand-hew the timbering in order to "be funny." But as the idea took shape, and the painter gave a careful "quality," like that of white-wash, to his walls, as we argued over the weathering of the wood, that it might not look self-conscious, and old wood was brought and set up as a copy, and as the men were constantly told to "take your time, and get it right," a very pleasant enthusiasm grew among them, and I am told that visitors were welcomed by them, and shown about, and came away with a feeling that they had learned something about French peasant architecture, and had run across the craftsman's joy in work into which he had put something of himself. After all, if you want a thing badly enough, you can generally get it: our lack in America is one less, perhaps, of supply than of demand.—Yours, &c.,

FRANCES M. ORR.

Sewickley, Pennsylvania.

## T. L. BEDDOES

SIR,—I am revising for publication a study of the poet Thomas Lovell Beddoes, written some years ago and kept by me because I hoped to discover further material. May I therefore trespass on your kindness to ask, in particular, whether any letters of Beddoes, other than those printed by Kelsoll and Gosse, are known by your readers to exist? The late Professor F. Y. Edgeworth told me there were a few letters in the possession of relatives, but he was unable at that time to procure me access to them; and the valuable correspondence between Beddoes and his college friend, John G. H. Bourne (afterwards Chief Justice of Newfoundland), has presumably disappeared. If these letters are still extant I should be very grateful for any information that might lead me to them.—Yours, &c.,

C. COLLEER ABBOTT.

King's College, Aberdeen.

## ELEUTHERA

WHEN I listen in a silence now, I can pretend to myself that I can hear Eleuthera's spirit—"a sperrit nobuddy never see," say the negroes, "a sperrit come outa tha watter . . .", a deep note, *o-o-oong*, *o-o-oong*, a call for solitude. Well, spellweaver, there is your solitude for you; in so far as I disturbed it, I am now withdrawn. To Nassau, full of drunk Americans—to New York, full of Americans drunk and sober—to London, full of everybody in the world, drunk and sober, dead and alive, ghosts and stockbrokers, I am withdrawn, while the noises of arguments for going back to Eleuthera sound less and less logically clear. There are good arguments—excellent reasons why we should all go to Eleuthera. But better than any argument there is the spell, the special haunting folly of the island air.

That spell of exquisiteness is, after all, in spite of its frail unreason, the truest asset of any island. Yes, stone is a heavy unmistakable thing, certainly, and so are the rock ploughs that carve it out of the island quarries, and so will be the bungalows that will encase in stone future lovers of the island; the new roads are vital, leaping things weaving between one village and another, waiting for their shuttle motor-buses; the harbour is a thing that is certainly there, pinned down with useful buoys, riveted with piers and dredgers. Certainly Messrs. Faith, Hope and Charity, Ltd., can count their blessings one by one, and use at least two hands doing it—Faith, confident in what is achieved, Hope inspired by what will be achieved, and Charity gentle to the jealousies and pettiness and indolences that stand as obstacles in the way of all achievement in the West Indies—and possibly elsewhere. For this spell is a

West Indian spell, reaching all the way from the Bahamas, from Eleuthera—an island that no one ever noticed until Messrs. Faith, Hope and Charity saw all the solid assets, moved a mountain or two, and rechristened themselves Hatchet Bay, Limited.

But for all their faith and their hope and their charity, it seems to me that there is something missed if they count their blessings one by one and fail to count just one day and another day, and all the still hours among lily-lined sand-dunes and all the whispering minutes beside little green waves—all the vague and exquisite wastes of time that furnish Eleuthera's air.

Take waking up in the morning, for instance—only you cannot take it. It is lost as soon as thought of. What is there to hold, alas! in the spell of waking up in a little house like a ship, filled with the brittle chatter of lake ripples all round? For the house, on a rock only forty feet square, swims in a dilution of sunlight and sea-light in the middle of Hatchet Bay. Especially in the mornings does that house swing suspended in light, and to remember those wakings is a holding of the breath of memory. All the grown-up assets—new village—new store—new pier—new cut—new roads—are streaked and spotted about the floating house's skyline, but the spell of exquisiteness—an asset for gods or ghosts or you or me to put faith in, lives in the house, and goes out with you or me wherever we go all day and comes home with us at night.

The new sparkling white village of Hatchet Bay sits in one simple row on a curved rise on Eleuthera's edge. You go to it in a boat from the house—a boat that flies above fishes—ploughs between skittering panics of little fishes. And there is the new village—a store—an office—some clothes-lines—a petrol-pump—half a dozen bungalows lived in by real people. If I were Messrs. Faith, Hope and Charity, Ltd., I should indeed be proud of having added a new white village, full of real people, to the British Empire, but if I were myself and had created Hatchet Bay, I should be much prouder of having found the perfect game to play, the most amazing pretence—of having deceived real flesh-and-bone people into taking part in my game, into coming to live in my bungalows and parking their real Ford cars in my toy street. For the game is real enough for real people—that's why it's such a good game—the roofs withstand the rare winds, the goods in the store can be paid for and eaten, the drinks in the bar can make all thirsty niggers as drunk as they like on pay-night—exactly as if real people, instead of Faith or Hope or Charity or I, had made them all. I suppose Messrs. F., H. and C., now that they call themselves Hatchet Bay, Limited, feel quite real and grown-up about it all, since they spend and reap real money. But to me it would be as if, a quarter of a century ago, grown-ups had accepted as a Practical Proposition a harbour I had dug in wet sand on the edge of a pool, or a town I had built for my chessmen out of wooden bricks.

To carry us now from the new village, the spell would have to take wheels, of course, in the prosaic shape of a Ford. But after all, a spell must take either wheels or wings. For the bush is moving with wings and streaking headlong escapes—little yellow-barred birds—little blue-barred birds—big birds with absurdly flattened beaks as though they were forever colliding with their reflections—blue and scarlet and golden butterflies—spinning locusts—springing lizards in bloomy-grey or grass-green. And we, in a veteran Ford with wheels wistfully oval with age, spend most of our time in the air too. If we do not like that, we can enchant the horse, Tomato, into our service, and lollop softly along sanded trails.

Shores of all textures bind our island round—a shore

made entirely of shells, a shore of rock, a shore of flawless sand. The shore made of shells is good for lying on—lying with eyes so close to the ground that sometimes a dozen shells or so catch on an eyelash. For any lazy handful—fingerful—eyelash full—is a store of jewels, ivories, trumpets, rose petals, cornucopias—all perfect and all so small that they cling in the wrinkles of a hand like pollen. But a shore made of pure sand is better for bathing; one must admit that the shapes of tiny, sharp-carven shells are more satisfying to have printed on the sight than on the bare foot. The shore of sand only flowers rarely in big pink or golden shells, or pale, graven sand-dollars, or yellow or purple sea fans and coral branches—all sown in silver furrows by a serenely careless garden-making sea. There are palms that shade that shore, and when you leave the shade and swim, you can see little slim fishes flashing like busy needles through the green silken water in the sun. And you can watch under the gaudy clear water your ghostly green legs waving in slow, Mordkin leaps above the fluted sand.

But the shore made of rock is to me the strongest charm. On the Atlantic shore of Eleuthera the rocks go sloping down to slip out of sight under the smooth green rollers. On a fine day the Atlantic waves come in from a long way out, tall, polished, foamless, in perfect blue ridges with green shadows—none of your vulgar spray or fuss—until, bending further and further and further over, to form the ideal, the perfect cylinder, they overreach themselves and break, shattered and clamorous at last, with a sound like gongs. The rocky shore is pitted with circular gardened pools, each with a mossy gay coral rock in the middle, and each connected with the sea by a thin wriggling channel. It is an odd thing that every tiny tiger-striped fish in these pools, in spite of his youth and his silly look, has always worked out his line of escape, and if so much as your shadow touches his pool, he makes straight for the loophole—never loses his head or bumps his nose as you or I might. Even if the human enemy devilishly stops up the channel of escape with stones, the fishlet will, without hesitation, jump out of the water on to dry rock as near to the emergency exit as he can, always on the sea side of the pool, and, with a few deft wriggles, reinsert himself into the channel below the obstruction. And so he pricks through danger into the large safety of the sea—a sanctuary so much too large and lost for so small and exquisite a fugitive. As you move from pool to pool, the long-legged crabs—each thinking himself the only object of your attention, skitter down the rock slopes, scatter-splash into the nearest wave. But sometimes—for even a blue crab is fallible—they start too late, and then, like the striped fish, the crab keeps his head. With a quick swivel of his stalked eyes, he selects a rock-pimple (always much too small to hide him) and curtsies absurdly behind it, watching you with a cold eye sparkling above the tense quivering claw which he holds over his face—exactly like a baby playing hide and seek. It is good manners to pretend not to see the crab or the baby, in these circumstances. One crab was asleep in the sun; if a crab could nod drowsily in the sunlight, nodding it was. I crept up behind it and gave it a derisive tap on its horny behind. "Golly!" it cried—it shot into the air—its claws got entangled—it fell over two or three of its feet—its eyes squinted so that the stalks were almost knotted—it reeled away in the wrong direction, trying vainly to collect its self-respect, sweating at every chink in its armour. Unfortunately for its dignity there was another crab looking—a crimson hero, who knew exactly how to tackle us. When we lifted the branch of coral that sheltered it in a pool it instantly flew at us—a little claret-coloured David taking arms against an out-



size Goliath with no Israelites to back it up or show off before.

What an enchantment of wasted time. Days wasted exquisitely and evenings spent lying on the pier of the house on the rock—evenings lit by a plum-blue afterglow, lit by far lightning springing from turret to turret of cloud, lit by the swimming moon, lit by the glassy light buried in the still striped harbour. And the unknown thing—the sea-serpent—the spirit that nobody ever saw—moves with its sombre low moan, slowly across the harbour—o-o-oong—o-o-oong—the disturbed spirit of the violated lake, crying for solitude again.

STELLA BENSON.

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

IS it, I wonder, yet another divine inspiration of Mr. Cochran's that the sketches in "Wake Up and Dream," his new revue at the Pavilion, are in the main uninteresting and devoid of wit? At any rate, if they had been up to the standard of the rest of the entertainment I should not have been able to refer periodically to my programme without missing some gem of visual effect, or to place on record that the ravishing creature who appears as the "Lady of the Moon" in an early scene is Miss Laurie Devine; that Miss Tilly Losch is responsible for the choreography as well as dancing the principal part in "Coppelia from the Wings," an extraordinarily ingenious impression of the Empire in 1910, in which one is given illusion within illusion; that the three Russians, who do such utterly impossible things with their legs and bodies in another ballet, "The Gold Rush," are Freda, Gertrude, and Louis Berkoff; that Sir Thomas Beecham, in the skit called "Operatic Pills," is not really Sir Thomas Beecham but Mr. Sonnie Hale; that Mr. Cole Porter wrote the very witty words and the catchy syncopated music of "Let's Do It," a slightly risky song which is given its full effect by Mr. Hale and Miss Jessie Matthews; and that the actor who sings and acts so charmingly and with such sense of character as a gigolo in the night club scene is Mr. William Stephens. But Mr. John Hastings Turner, who wrote the "book," can do better things than this, as is brought home the more forcibly by the fact that he has attempted such ambitious and potentially amusing things as imaginary conversations between Mr. Bernard Shaw and Dr. Johnson.

Mr. Seymour Hicks has revived at the Lyceum "The Man in Dress Clothes," his adaptation of what was once probably a witty French farcical comedy. No doubt any play requires broadening for so vast a theatre as the Lyceum, but one cannot help regretting that Mr. Hicks, with his inimitable talent for the Gallic drama, went to such lengths to ensure his contact with the audience. Still, there was no question of his success, and his company were in key with his method, which is more than can be said of many actor-managers' productions. Miss Ellaline Terriss is making a pleasant reappearance as the heroine, and the company also include such expert farceurs as Mr. Edmund Gwenn and Miss Margaret Yarde.

The Children's Theatre is quaint and full of variety. At the sound of a slightly cracked but musical bell the curtain rises on a play "Mamagoe and the Robbers," a Burmese adventure, full of action. After this follow songs and dances. In one song the audience are asked to join in the chorus, which they do loudly. Two of the best items are "The Old Sailor" and "Spare a Copper"—the latter is particularly charming and unexpected. A touch of the highbrow is provided by a Viking scene in which the colour and staging are beautiful. Indeed, the scenic effects throughout are remarkable for such a miniature stage. The whole company play with a zest and enjoyment which carry all before them. Brember Wills as a sailor, an old gaffer, and a pirate captain is a joy, and his changes of character

would render him unrecognizable were it not for his always bright and twinkling eyes. The last play is strong meat—pirates and a beauteous maiden! One wondered if the small people in front might be afraid, but the more fearless it was the more enthusiastic they became and the evening ended in an orgy of applause.

\* \* \*

Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Sunday, April 7th.—

Mr. John J. Murphy, on "The Future of Preaching," South Place, 11.

"Black St. Anthony," by "Aleric Scott" (Repertory Players), at the Strand.

Monday, April 8th.—

British Drama League, Amateur Matinée, Wyndham's.

"The Rebel Maid," "N. B. and M." Operatic Society, King George's Hall, 7.30.

"Charivaria," Musical entertainment, at Golders Green Hippodrome.

Edwin Fischer, Pianoforte Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

Tuesday, April 9th.—

Mr. Harry Hall, on "The New Piccadilly Circus Station," Institution of Civil Engineers, 6.

Mr. R. H. Mottram, on "Books and Progress," Foyle's Bookshop, 8.

Wednesday, April 10th.—

Professor Noel Baker, on "The Disarmament Conference," the Wireless, 7.

Mr. G. H. Nash, on "Electrical Communication," Royal Society of Arts, 8.

"Porgy," at His Majesty's.

Thursday, April 11th.—

International Society for Contemporary Music begins its Festival at Geneva.

Mary Jarred, Song Recital, Aeolian Hall, 8.

Friday, April 12th.—

P.E.N. Club Matinée, "The Dance of Life," by Hermon Ould, Wyndham's, 2.30.

Mr. Norman MacEwan's play, "The Infinite Shoe-black," at the Arts Theatre.

OMICRON.

## WATER MUSIC

As our boat, reflected  
In the mirror of the lake,  
Cracked the mirror, crisply pressing  
Forward, with a widening wake;  
You looked down, and saw erected  
In the deeps before our prow,  
A world of weeds caressing  
Sandy slips and crater springs,  
Grottoes, water-rings,  
Shades that flashed a fin,  
Broke the surface, then were gone  
Where the willow-fronds dipped in.

Slowly oared we on;  
Gravely sweeping, like a cloud  
Over the green world below;  
Lapping, lapping, soft and loud,  
Loud and soft, against the flow,  
Crimping through the lipping ripples  
O'er that water-forest looming,  
While our shadow deep and glooming  
Crept along the weedy bed.

Minnow shoals turned and fled  
Swiftly, all as one, a single thought  
Out of silver liquid wrought.  
Pike, with stately heaving breath,  
Vanished, slow and swift as death.  
You looked down and viewed these things  
As an eagle in his flight,  
Poised upon astonished wings,  
Stares at earth through floors of light.

RICHARD CHURCH.



## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

## RETICENCE

**R**ETICENCE in autobiography is probably fatal. If a man goes into the public confessional, he must be prepared to shout the ultimate "peccavi," to tear off the last poor rag that hides the nakedness of his own miserable soul. It is notorious that very few people have succeeded in this masochistic form of literature, though thousands have tried and failed. There are at least two very common causes of failure. The autobiographer must either be reticent or irreticent; he cannot have it both ways; but over and over again people who write their autobiographies (or even letters) practise a pseudo-irreticence, posing before the world and themselves, trying to hide with one hand what they uncover with the other. The result is often an interesting psychological study; but the autobiography itself is never first class, it has about it a flavour of the sham and the meretricious. The second cause of failure is often curiously subtle. The quality of the character of the man who is the subject of an autobiography or even a biography seems to infect the work itself. It is better not to write one's biography at all, to remain eternally reticent, than to reveal in a second-rate book a mean little second-rate soul.

\* \* \*

These reflections were occasioned by the study of the autobiographical material of two very different men, Tolstoy and Lord Alfred Douglas. Two more volumes of the Centenary Edition of Tolstoy's works have just been published: Vol. I., "The Life of Tolstoy: First Fifty Years," by Aylmer Maude, and Vol. 18, "What is Art? and Essays on Art." At the same time there has been published "The Letters of Tolstoy and his Cousin, Countess Alexandra Tolstoy (1857-1908)," translated by Leo Islavin (Methuen, 7s. 6d.). It is strange that the letters in this last volume have not been translated before; they were published in Russia many years ago, and are used repeatedly by Mr. Maude in his biography. One therefore welcomes Mr. Islavin's translation, though it is not a very good one. As for Mr. Maude's biography, the present is a revised edition of the two volumes which originally appeared in 1908 and 1910. It is an admirable "Life," and it has the great merit of making such continual use of Tolstoy's letters, diaries, and works that it is almost as much an autobiography as a biography.

\* \* \*

No one has ever succeeded in flinging away reticence so superbly as Tolstoy. Mr. Bernard Shaw, in a review which is printed as an introduction to Mr. Maude's volume, devotes most of his space to insisting on Tolstoy's childishness and foolishness. He takes the view of Tolstoy's wife who "gave him up as impossible, and managed for him without saying anything harsher than the Russian formula, 'Nothing matters so long as the baby is not crying.'" No doubt Tolstoy was childish and foolish, but it is easy to exaggerate this side of his character. His every thought and feeling came out of him with naked simplicity and the force of an explosion, and so—a rare thing with "great" men—we know his childishness as intimately as we know his greatness. Read the letter of Tolstoy on pages 69 and 70 of Mr. Islavin's translation, and you will see the astonish-

ing quality of his irreticence. And the answer of Countess Alexandra is worth quoting:—

"It did me much good, as I believe every word you say, and as your previous letter only confirms me about your being the queerest creature alive. If you do tell a lie now and then, it is due to the very effort you make to be truthful at any cost whatever."

\* \* \*

"The Autobiography of Lord Alfred Douglas" (Secker, 21s.) also contains the quality of irreticence, but it is not thereby saved from second-rateness. The reason is to be found partly in the quality of the irreticence and partly in the quality of what is revealed. It is a book which many people will read without pleasure, but with considerable mental discomfort, the kind of discomfort which occasionally comes over one when listening to someone making a speech for the taste of which one blushes without responsibility. As a psychological study, however, the book is of great interest. Lord Alfred Douglas is an aristocrat, a fact which he does not forget or allow his reader to forget. Of the Duke of Richmond's refusal to admit him to his private stand at Goodwood in 1910, he makes the following sublime remark: "Of course, as long as the Duke of Richmond has a Private Stand he is at liberty to refuse admission to persons of better birth than himself, while admitting any kind of *nouveau riche* or dubious profiteer." He is a poet of some merit, but his own view of those merits is exaggerated. "I had published," he says, "what even my worst enemies admit to be some of the finest poetry in the English language." He is convinced that after his wife and he are dead, "everything we have done, said, or written will be the object of public interest"; and that his letters from George Wyndham "in a hundred, or even fifty, years will be worth more than all his other letters put together, just because they were written to me." He is a Roman Catholic, a fact which he does not forget or allow his reader to forget. He lived in a world in which the vendetta by libel action was prevalent. In his opinion the late Mr. Robert Ross was conducting a vendetta against him and instigated the publication of a libellous book on Lord Alfred by Mr. Ransome, "Oscar Wilde, a Critical Study." Lord Alfred issued a writ for libel, Mr. Ransome pleaded justification, and Lord Alfred lost his case. Naturally he sought revenge against Ross, who eventually prosecuted him for criminal libel. Lord Alfred describes at length his efforts to get evidence to prove that Ross was addicted to the vice with which most of these libel actions were concerned. He had heard that evidence was obtainable from a Mr. E. at a house near Campden Hill. But he could not find the house. So he prayed to St. Anthony of Padua, as his custom is in such difficulties. And he believes that St. Anthony heard his prayer and sent him an angel in the likeness of "a beautiful little boy about ten years old" who showed him the house. St. Anthony has apparently not studied certain texts about enemies and forgiveness. On another occasion he behaved with more Christian feeling. Lord Alfred Douglas has a horror of mice, and when he was in prison, he "prayed desperately to St. Anthony of Padua to keep mice away from me." St. Anthony did.

LEONARD WOOLF.

## REVIEWS

## A FORMIDABLE SHADOW

**The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti.** Edited by MARION D. FRANKFURTER and GARDNER JACKSON. (Constable. 7s. 6d.)

THOSE of us who regard good relations with the United States as the most important object of British foreign policy may well hesitate to speak our minds about the case of Sacco and Vanzetti. After all, the persecution of men for their political opinions has become a commonplace during the last fourteen years, and many of those who protested most loudly against this execution would themselves, if they attained power, attempt to exterminate all opponents of their theories. Yet the case of Sacco and Vanzetti does excite a more passionate disgust, I think, than the execution of thousands in Russia, Hungary, and Italy. And this is partly due to our expecting a very different standard of justice and tolerance from Americans than from other peoples: Mr. Volstead has not yet obliterated the memory of Washington and Lincoln. The seven years' imprisonment which the men suffered before execution is another aggravating circumstance, but for this the State of Massachusetts cannot altogether be blamed; a more despotic power would have given them no respite, and their friends no time to excite the sympathy of the world. The chief grounds for our horror are that the executions were so unnecessary, and the reason given for them so hypocritical. The tranquil condition of the United States afforded no excuse for terroristic methods, and the Judge, the Governor of the State, and the Commission of Inquiry all pretended to condemn the men as murderers, when their only crime was being theoretical anarchists.

How far this hypocrisy was conscious in all of those responsible for this judicial murder is more difficult to discover. The evidence on which they were found guilty of banditry is incredibly feeble: the more one studies the case, the more one is amazed at the effrontery of those who condemned them. The Judge was a foolish old man who could not prevent himself from airing his prejudice both in Court and out of it; and afterwards from boasting of what he had done to those "anarchistic bastards." When appeals were lodged on the ground of his prejudice, the law of Massachusetts, unique and to-day still unchanged, entitled him to hear them himself, thus affording an astonished world the spectacle of a man sitting formally on his own conduct and pronouncing himself irreproachable. Governor Fuller was less crude in his methods, and Vanzetti believed, perhaps rightly, that he had convinced him of his innocence. But Governor Fuller could not afford to make himself unpopular with the rich. Moreover, he was an ambitious politician, with an eye, some said, on the office of President; he did not wish to be unpopular even with the poor. So he appointed a commission of three to assist his decision. One was a judge, notorious for his loathing of Italians, but the dominating figure was Mr. Lowell, President of Harvard, and head of one of the proudest Boston clans. A gentleman, cultured and inheriting a liberal tradition, wealthy and with nothing to fear, he heard the witnesses, pondered on the evidence, and decided that "on the whole, beyond all reasonable doubt, Vanzetti was guilty." "On the whole", "beyond all reasonable doubt"—Mr. Lowell was not knave enough to deny entirely his uncertainty, or else he was too stupid to realize that in a couple of phrases he had betrayed it. The men were electrocuted, and their blood is on Mr. Lowell even more than on Judge Thayer or Governor Fuller. His name will not be forgotten.

The book under review contains a summary of the case, well presented, but so compressed that it is valuable chiefly as an *aide-mémoire* to those who have already examined the facts. I have dwelt on it rather than on the letters written by the two men during their long imprisonment, because I think that the intrinsic value of these has been over-rated. Neither Sacco nor Vanzetti wrote English with ease, but Vanzetti, who was distinctly intelligent, improved enormously his command of the language during his captivity. Both men were certain from the first that they were doomed. Such injustice fitted their simple theories of society, and

their great surprise was the sympathy and help they received from persons not of their class. It is to the honour of America that prodigious efforts were made by many who had no sympathy for anarchistic or socialistic theories to liberate the two men, and the old Boston society which produced Lowell also produced some of the prisoners' most indefatigable supporters. The letters lend psychological confirmation to the material evidence of the men's innocence. Those of Vanzetti in particular are clearly written by an idealist to whom the idea of committing murder for profit was inconceivable. Yet he had a sense of humour, and also a curious realism, which expressed itself even in his last words in the electric chair—"I forgive *some* people for what they are now doing to me." The natural eloquence of an Italian, always rather unctuous to an English ear, becomes still less attractive when translated into broken English, yet Vanzetti sometimes strikes a noble phrase. For instance, when a postcard of the Niagara Falls was sent him:—

"The Falls brings into my cell a glance of the immense awe of Nature, and an echo of its idiom into my soul; and your faith feeds my faith—now that life's oil is far from my lamp."

And again in his statement after receiving sentence:—

"If it had not been for these things, I might have live out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have die, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man as now we do by accident. Our words—our lives—our pains—nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler—all! That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph."

The day still seems distant when Madison Square in New York and Commonwealth Avenue in Boston may be renamed after these two unintentional martyrs. But Vanzetti's description of himself remains true: he is "a vanquished man but a formidable shadow."

RAYMOND MORTIMER.

## TIME AND MEMORY

**Time and Memory.** By F. L. LUCAS. Hogarth Living Poets. (Hogarth Press. 4s. 6d.)

It is a melancholy but notorious fact that we do not always like the art of those we love. "I love the man and I won't talk about his books," said Dr. Johnson, and too often we all have occasion to repeat his words. Not only are the mind, manner, and temperament of Mr. Lucas to me peculiarly sympathetic, his poetry seems to express them perfectly almost; which means that I like his art for the same reasons that I like him. This is extremely fortunate; also I think it does credit to my taste in men and books.

When the Juggernaut-car of culture passes over a man, as a rule it mercifully unman him. He becomes a professor of literature, an extension lecturer or the editor of a literary magazine, and lives happily ever after. But, occasionally, aiming a little higher, the vehicle merely crushes a rib or two, permanently ruins the victim's digestion and injures his heart. One so maimed stands a chance of becoming an elegiac poet. Because he is alive, physically and emotionally, he has his share of common human experience, and because his wits have been sharpened and his understanding improved he cannot resist meditating on that experience and criticizing it. Unrelegated to any safe suburban garden or vegetable plot, he tramps the highway with the rest pursuing the classic shadow—happiness; only, unlike the rest, he knows that it is a shadow, for he cannot help seeing an inch and a half beyond his nose. Wherefore he soon becomes hopeless and ironical, and very likely takes to poetry.

Mr. Lucas is in a great tradition: Gray is an ancestor, Matthew Arnold a great-uncle. He feels as intensely as anyone, and he thinks more clearly than most. He has the common habit of desiring the impossible and the uncommon gift of seeing that it is impossible. Also he has a gift of expression. He can express some part at any rate of what



he feels and thinks; and what he does feel and think is not merely a direct reaction to and criticism of life but a thousand overtones inspired by knowledge of what other minds have thought and felt. Behind his simplest, most unobtrusive, phrase lies the glory that was Greece and the splendour that was Rome, to say nothing of London, Paris, and Weimar; and this habit of reflecting on life and listening for echoes gives to his gesture, when he grabs at what he knows to be an illusion, some of the deliberation and dignity of a slow-motion picture:—

"God gave me life, youth, passion, ecstasy:  
My youth, my love God took away from me.  
I turned to wisdom (lonely are the wise!),  
But God made faint my brain and dim my eyes.  
Yet something still was left; the world was mine,  
With all its ageless beauty's anodyne—  
The thrush, the reddening plum, the scent of may,  
The white of winter. These too God took away."

Also I find Mr. Lucas's poetry sympathetic rather in the way that, I fancy, he finds sympathetic the poetry of Thomas Hardy. Like Hardy he is a born micromaniac: I like that. How shall I explain what I mean? There is in Vienna a famous inn, and nothing about that inn is more famous than its chocolate. Here, one can persuade oneself, they ground the kernel for the Prince Eugene and Metternich (Mozart would have been a bit too shabby); here, if anywhere, the imperial eagles can still flap their wings and Habsburg chins tilt heavenward. Advances a *maitre d'hôtel* who must surely be the ghost of a lackey of Maria Theresa; and my companion—a child of twenty—"I'd like some of that cocoa I had yesterday." But not that word "cocoa" pleases me more than:—

"We will not cling (what use to clutch a shade?),  
Will swear no constancy—  
(Can a dream constant be? Or flowers not fade?)  
No bond shall bind the love of you and me  
Save the sad loving-kindliness  
Of those who know  
That they are human and all best things go."

CLIVE BELL.

## THE MORAL OF CLOTHES

**The Future of Nakedness.** By JOHN LANGDON-DAVIES. (Noel Douglas. 3s. 6d.)

It is uncertain whether Mr. Langdon-Davies is an idealist or a theorist who feels compelled to accept the logical consequences of his argument. Undoubtedly his plea for the total abolition of clothes is comparable with the forcible reasons advanced by those who wish to prohibit alcohol. But he makes the initial mistake of all reformers, in assuming that humanity should only have what is good for it. He desires a healthier and more honest world: he would remove temptation by plucking out the mind's eye. Clothes are regarded as a necessary protection against the distempers of our climate, but Mr. Langdon-Davies calls in modern science and open-air treatment to prove that clothes are not only unnecessary but unhealthy. Without our clothes we would no longer catch colds or shiver in draughts. Our civilization, however, insists on clothes as a necessary means of concealing our mortal person: and concealment has caused a vast amount of obscurantism, hypocrisy, and mental ills. Nudity, in fact, is really shocking and a fit subject for persecution. Happy bathers, disporting on American beaches by moonlight, are dragged to prison by police. We permit paintings and statuary of the nude, but sectaries who attempted to emulate "Bould Neptune, Plutarch, and Nicodemus, All standing naked in the open air," would be promptly lynched, imprisoned, or hurried to asylums. But even as a means of artificial concealment, clothes are a failure. "A little wantonness in dress" is immorality's best aid. The real danger of clothes is recognized by the native men of northern Liberia: "They refuse to allow their women to affect any kind of clothing at all, and they give as their reason for this refusal, that if the women wore clothes they would become beautiful and be desired by men of foreign villages. Moreover, the first gown introduced among the Waja was worn to shreds owing to being constantly used by young men in their quest for wives." Mr.

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*The Flying Squad*

## ARTS AND CRAFTS

THERE is much to laugh at in the English theatre. But, unfortunately, there is more inducement to laugh at it, than in it. Its productions are as a rule, purely, or impurely, commercial, commercial to the point of blatancy, yet as an industry, it is a financial failure, and as an expression of art it is a joke.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, by the nature of his calling, is not a poet. It is demanded of him that he should be a harsh materialist. Hence, viewing the English theatre with a cold eye, he realises the futility of anticipating profits, which are rightly non-existent, and, faced with the difficult problem of getting something out of nothing, with Machiavellian subtlety he taxes the turnover on which the losses are made. The theatre is, therefore, directly taxed to the extent of approximately 15 per cent. on every penny paid by those extravagant enough to contribute towards its support.

It is possible that this taxation is a chastisement—a virtuous fine upon the exhibition of vicious banality. As such the penalty is a modest one.

With a few exceptions, all too rare—Maugham, a fine constructor; Hoffe, an expert sentimentalist; Galsworthy, a sedate dialectician; Barrie, a sugary revivalist; Shaw, a paradoxical pantaloon, and perhaps one or two others, who may be classed as men of letters, where are the dramatic writers?

What is the condition of the London stage to-day? Crook plays, American and English, are dead as mutton. Hip-pocket pistols, grease-paint blood, the throttled throats of virtuous victims, merely inspire ribald laughter from bored and satiric onlookers. These silly semblances of illusion have lost effect, and only the financial ruins remain of this collapse of crudity.

Literally, hundreds of plays have been produced in the West End during the last few years. In the course of some weeks first nights recur every night, and often even three a night. The majority of these plays are an insult to the intelligence, and are probably composed phonetically, since their creators have evidently not yet learned to read.

If these dramatic exercises paid, there might be some material justification for their existence. But 90 per cent. fail. Why, then, do they ever see the light of night? Because the low intelligence controlling the present theatre panders only to the lowest tastes, and ignorantly seeking to provide the public with what it wants, finds the Public don't want it.

Play-writing is an art. It is not the game for unsophisticated fools. To the writing of a play should come considerable study and learning, craft, subtlety, technique, sensitive characterisation and perfectly balanced lines. In fact, it requires almost as comprehensive a knowledge as the making of a suit of clothes. And, incidentally, if the London theatre would strive to attain Pope and Bradley's standard of production it might please Downing Street instead of overworking Carey Street. Lounge Suits from £10 10s. Dinner Suits from £14 14s. Dress Suits from £16 16s.

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Langdon-Davies's vision of the future in which a regenerate humanity pursues its daily avocations, *sans culotte, sans* everything, is quite logical, for he discusses the practical difficulties of the transitional stage, the economic changes, and destruction of industries. But sheer logic, in a world of compromise and folly, is always fantastic. Mr. Langdon-Davies is a severe moralist at heart, and he is inclined to overrate the influence of other moralists. But history surely proves that ecclesiastical thunders have been less effective than decorative instinct or the mysterious force known as feminine fashions. Pious and prim women, to-day, wear the fashionable short skirt and low collar, turning a deaf ear to the pulpit. Should fashion decree the substitution of the latest shade in woad, in place of clothes, humanity would probably be no better or worse.

### SIR CHARLES SEDLEY

**The Poetical and Dramatical Works of Sir Charles Sedley.**  
 Edited by V. DE SOLA PINTO. Two vols. (Constable.  
 £2 12s. 6d.)

So few people are competent to criticize or fully appreciate a learned work that it is surprising that scholarship, far from being discouraged, should have produced of late so many notable editions of English writers. The latest addition, published in a form that a scholar's work deserves, but does not always receive, is an *editio princeps* of Sir Charles Sedley's works. Professor Sola Pinto's biography of Sedley, in which this edition was foreshadowed, is one of the most important contributions to our still very limited knowledge of the life and times of the Restoration. In it, for the first time, one of the outstanding figures of Charles II.'s Court was portrayed against a background of contemporary events, many of which had never been revealed before. This biography must be considered as the first volume of an edition of Sedley's works, and it is a pity that it was not produced as such, for the editing of the works is confined to textual problems, and is not concerned with Sedley's life or his place in the history of literature.

Now, for the first time, the texts of Sedley's three plays and of as many poems as can be reasonably attributed to him have been carefully and thoroughly revised and collated with the earliest editions. The texts of the plays are those of the first quarto editions and preserve the original spelling and punctuation. For the poems, however, the task of establishing a canon and choosing a reliable text has presented considerable difficulties, although by patient industry Professor Pinto has succeeded in overcoming many of them. Sedley's poems are scattered in rare miscellanies and unreliable editions, and to trace them and then prove that they were written by him requires more patience and perseverance than most saints are commonly credited with. For Sedley, like his companions Buckhurst and Rochester, wrote "for his friends' delight," and did not care a farthing for what became of his manuscripts after they had left his hands, so that naturally enough they were freely altered and even added to in circulation, and an unscrupulous person into whose hands they might happen to fall had only to take them to a printer who would pay him for his trouble. Or again, a dishonest printer would not hesitate to use a distinguished and popular name like Sedley's to palm off the scribbles of some unknown poetaster. An editor is faced, therefore, with two problems: he must find authors for anonymous poems, and he must prove, conclusively if he can, that signed poems really were written by the men to whom they are ascribed. Inevitably there must be a margin of doubt, and Professor Pinto has wisely placed in an appendix a number of poems of uncertain origin that future research may perhaps incorporate in the canon of Sedley's verse. In the preparation of the canon itself he has had the good fortune to discover four copies of Kemp's miscellany (1672), in which several of Sedley's poems appeared anonymously for the first time, annotated in contemporary hands. These annotations agree on the whole in their ascriptions, and their agreement is about the surest evidence of authorship we can hope to find.

Having solved as far as he can the problem of attribution, an editor is faced with the choice of a text that most

nearly represents the author's manuscript. In the case of Sedley's plays there is no question that the first quartos represent this. With the poems, however, there is reason to suppose that, before his death, Sedley undertook to revise his work for an edition that his friend Captain Ayloffe produced in 1704. This is the first collected edition, and although it is not a rare book, it has been overlooked by Professor Pinto's predecessors, and there is actually no copy of it in the British Museum. It is the text of this edition that Professor Pinto has chosen for his own rather than the texts of the earlier miscellanies, partly because the best of Sedley's poems have been made familiar in this recension, partly because it represents the latest revision of Sedley's pen. Now when Sedley undertook this revision he was an old man who had outlived the lively generation for whom he had written, and a comparison of the early and late texts shows that his corrections took the form of smoothing out irregularities and altering phrases to conform with opinions of age, and the spirit of King William's Court. There is plenty of justification for printing the revised version, but we cannot help regretting the early texts which, for all their faults, probably represent Sedley's original inspiration.

The textual and explanatory notes to the plays and poems are both accurate and entertaining, and the complete bibliography will save any student of Sedley's work weeks of painful research. There are several irritating mistakes in the text that should not have escaped the proof-reader, and once or twice the punctuation of the old editions is so misleading as to require emending, but apart from these slight faults, this edition deserves the highest praise and respect.

### POETRY

**Selected Poems.** By CARL SPITTELER. Translated by E. C. MAYNE and J. F. MUIRHEAD. (Putnam. 10s. 6d.)

**Hogarth Living Poets:—The Passing of Guto.** By HUW MENAI. (4s. 6d.); **The China Cupboard.** By IDA GRAVES. (4s. 6d.); **Cambridge Poetry, 1929.** (3s. 6d.) (Hogarth Press.)

**English Poems.** By EDMUND BLUNDEN. New Readers' Library. (Duckworth. 3s. 6d.)

CARL SPITTELER, a German-Swiss, who died in 1924 aged eighty, spent a busy life in journalism and school-teaching, managing to produce an unnoticed book of verse when he was thirty-five, and only at the age of forty-seven was he able at last to retire in order to lead a secluded life, and give all his time to writing.

A man of gentle disposition, a scholar by temperament, yet struggling with the instant and worldly necessities of journalism, he chose, as one might choose a country house to retire to, the mythological age of Greece for his literary retreat. He endowed it with all the innocence, freshness, and sunshine that he might desire, and found his greatest joy in sweet and (for a novelty) humorous poetic narrative, always with a skeleton of interesting philosophic thought. In 1919 he received the Nobel prize.

The translators give only a canto of the twenty-thousand-line epic "Olympian Spring," the chief ground of the award. It seems mainly fanciful, rather delightful, a purely æsthetic enjoyment. He uses dialogue and conversational tones with a nice ease:—

"At any rate I'll want a horse and cart!"  
 "Want, want! Take all you want, and make a start!"  
 "We'll have to go right down to Vale Orestes."  
 "Then go—why not?—right down to Vale Orestes."

The lyrics and ballads, of which this book is chiefly composed, have often a more obvious modernity and less classical allusiveness. Spitteler had marked facility. He is fond of personification:—

"I asked, 'How on earth shall I surely know  
 The flower from the weed?'  
 As you looked at me slyly, you murmured low,  
 'Yes, how indeed?'"  
 "We stayed content in our sunny nook  
 Hour after hour,  
 Till over the hill did maliciously look  
 A prim church-tower."

But he writes with a lightness and adult innocence that is best appreciated in bulk.

Innocence, though less fanciful—the innocence of a John

Clare—stamps also the work of Huw Menai, which has unusual spontaneity. Here are verses that were *necessary*, and not a literary student's diversion. Mr. Menai is a Welsh miner who left school at twelve; finds Shakespeare hard to read; and had Palgrave for tutor. He has suffered poverty and unemployment; he has had "doubts" and returned to a simple faith, in stressing which he occasionally endangers his lyricism. But he can "look in his heart and write" with the mixture of feeling and detachment that is a poet's, whatever else are his limitations:—

"Oh! I am but some dreaming fool  
Who will throw pebbles in a pool,  
Imagine, when the water stirs,  
I've shaken the whole universe."

Any heart-felt cry seems to drop into poetry without effort.

"Lord God! wilt Thou for pity's sake  
Give us Thy guidance through this night?"

Who dares to be so simple nowadays?

Miss Graves does not give the impression of writing out of an energetic artistic impulse. Her language, her moods are meagre; even her little pagan cameos are mental. The title poem and one or two others, however, show that she can occasionally raise herself up.

The "Cambridge Poetry" hints at little innovation among the youngest writers, even though some old-fashioned lines are printed vertically instead of horizontally. If one is to make a pick from a level enough lot, John Davenport, Richard Eberhart, and Timothy White might be picked, the last because he is the most in tune with his age, and versifies the realities of Suburbia, instead of the unrealities of Arcadia.

It is pleasant to have the settled music of Mr. Blunden's "English Poems," reprinted in a revised pocket edition, to enjoy once again.

### THE CANONIZATION OF GENERAL DYER

*General Dyer.* By IAN COLVIN. (Blackwood. 20s.)

THIS book is, we imagine, the last act in the canonization of General Dyer. It is a biography of the man who was responsible for the shooting at Amritsar; the jacket of the book informs the reader that that shooting is "the central feature" of the book; its moral is that the General was entirely in the right, a military saint betrayed by "the frocks," and that everyone who criticized him was a fool, weakling, traitor, or scoundrel. This canonization of the General, which has been proceeding ever since he was allowed to resign, is a curious phenomenon. The massacre at Amritsar is happily one of those incidents which have been extremely rare in British history; it was entirely contrary to the traditions of British law and administration, civil or military—not to speak of humanity; it was committed just after a war when men's judgment was still warped or unbalanced by passions, notably those of fear and hate. The action of General Dyer was investigated by the Hunter Committee, the European members of which were, in addition to Lord Hunter, a Judge of the High Court, Calcutta, a member of the Indian Civil Service, the Officer Commanding the Peshawar Division, and an Anglo-Indian merchant resident in Lucknow. His action was condemned by the Majority Report of this Committee, signed by the European members; it was condemned by the Government of India; it was condemned by the House of Commons. The honesty and good faith of the General were not questioned, but it was felt almost universally that a lack of judgment and acceptance of standards of action repudiated by this country, had led him to commit an act of "frightfulness," as Mr. Churchill called it, which, now that the war was over, most people looked back on with horror and disgust.

It might be expected that those who count themselves peculiarly fitted to be the guardians of British honour would do their best to allow the world to forget the unfortunate General and his action at Amritsar. Far from it. They conduct a regular campaign for turning General Dyer into a saint, a martyr, and a hero. The answer to this lamentable campaign are the bare facts. It is worth while, therefore, recording the bare facts about the shooting in Amritsar, facts which even his defenders cannot deny. On April 10th,

1919, there was rioting in Amritsar; the mob was fired upon and several people were killed or wounded; the mob then got completely out of control, sacked and burnt banks, &c., killed four Europeans, and brutally assaulted a European lady. General Dyer reached Amritsar on the evening of the 11th. Martial law was proclaimed and all meetings were prohibited. On April 13th a meeting of about 10,000 persons gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh, an open space surrounded by buildings with narrow approaches. The meeting was addressed by orators. The meeting was unarmed, though it is probable that a certain number of people had *lathis*. General Dyer marched a column of about fifty men to the spot, and within ten seconds of his arrival opened fire upon the crowd. The crowd showed no sign of attacking; in fact, it tried to disperse. But Dyer gave it no warning and no time to disperse. He opened fire on it and continued firing for ten minutes. When the mob, in its efforts to get away, split into two halves, Dyer "gave orders to direct fire on these two crowds." The troops fired 1,650 rounds. According to the Hunter Committee 379 persons were killed and probably three times that number wounded.

Before the Hunter Committee Dyer made it quite clear why he had acted in this way. He admitted that he could probably have dispersed the crowd without firing. But then, as he said, "they would all come back and laugh at me, and I considered I would be making myself a fool." (Presumably it is better that 379 persons should be shot down in cold blood than that one British General should be laughed at.) He considered that the events in Amritsar were part of a general uprising or rebellion. He fired on the crowd not to disperse it, but in order to create an impression upon and strike terror into the rest of the Punjab.

Well, there are the facts, and everyone can form their own opinion upon them. For our part, we think that the vast majority of English people repudiate Dyer's action, and that the attempt to turn a man who, through an error of judgment, committed this horrible act into a hero and a saint is doing no service either to his memory or to their country.

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## THE GOTHIC REVIVAL

**The Gothic Revival.** By KENNETH CLARK. (Constable. 21s.)

THIS is the first work of a young writer. He has made good use of his opportunity in being young. No one of an earlier generation, one surmises, would have been able to study the Gothic Revival with the benign and tolerant curiosity and the amused detachment which charms us in this work. Those whose youth was passed even in the aftermath of that grand upheaval, those who remember the monstrous Gothicisms that were still erecting can hardly control their features into an ironic smile, they break out into raving and obscene objurgation. But Mr. Clark keeps admirably cool. He is penetratingly critical and yet can be indulgent in his appreciation of whatever was genuine in the strange medley which he lays before us.

Mr. Clark's book is a remarkable essay in what is almost a new type of criticism. Rather than a history of art it is a history of taste, since the whole sequence of events is controlled rather by the taste of the amateur than by the special impulses of the creative artist. Our author has seen what a grand tragi-comedy his subject provides, and he has unfolded its fantastic vicissitudes with a dry humorous precision which is very enjoyable.

Fantastic it certainly is, in one way or another, throughout the whole evolution, from the beginnings in the mid-eighteenth century, from the Abbot of Strawberry Hill with his caddis-worm ways; and the other Abbot, he of Fonthill, with his grand, extravagant, theatrical manner, his aristocratic caprices, and his tower that settles almost at once on its foundations; through Pugin, with his mania for etching his vast day-dreams in a tiny boat in mid-ocean; through the awe-inspiring sacramentality of the precocious undergraduate censors Neale and Webb, down to the pure and (literally) knockabout farce of Gilbert Scott's mass production and the pathetic comedy of Ruskin's Museum at Oxford.

Every sort of emotion, the precious snobbism of Walpole's circle, the patriotic fervour of the early nineteenth century, the desperate religiosity of the Camden Society, gets woven into the complex strand of theory, fact, and fashion which makes up the Gothic movement—every sort of emotion, except, indeed, the æsthetic. That, somehow, is always out of the picture. Though each new prophet promises, if his nostrum be followed, that Beauty will arrive in time, she remains, alas! the one thing that never turns up. Perhaps good sense and sound reasoning may also be found wanting. They are certainly not conspicuous at any moment and at times sheer lunatic folly seems to take control, as when the precious Camden associates take upon their undergraduate shoulders the whole burden of deciding which particular moment in the centuries of Gothic practice was the moment of supreme authentic inspiration, and having hunted it down to a period in early Decorated, invite Bishops, Rectors, and all whom it may concern to "restore" the whole of a building under their care to that date if so much as a scrap of window moulding of the sacrosanct style has survived in an odd corner.

In the height of the hurly-burly Ruskin's pathetic form is seen hustled and harried, enthusiastic and mistrustful and for ever disappointed by the results of his own dangerous eloquence. Indeed, after the patriotic outbreak of the early nineteenth century when, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, Gothic was held to be a purely English invention, had subsided, Ruskin's writing led to a new outbreak of exotic Gothicism which was, if possible, more grotesque in its naïve incomprehension. There is a street in Bristol which should be preserved as a monument to show what heights of folly the Gothic Revival led to. It is a street of mean business offices of three or four squat storeys built with the dead, mechanical, reach-me-down construction of typical later Victorian tradition and crammed throughout its length with a fine and varied selection of Veronese and Venetian battlements copied religiously from Ruskin's works.

As may be supposed, this well-meant but forlorn attempt to sanctify the house of Mammon has, after all these years

have begrimed and mouldered the flimsy structure, only succeeded in making Mammon look derelict and inefficient. To such strange futilities did this foundationless system of religious and romantic expressionism lead. There is, of course, something infinitely pathetic in this hopeless quest throughout the nineteenth century for that æsthetic poise which the destruction of all genuine tradition had brought with it. It was in part the impatient restlessness of the Romantic movement that had brought about that destruction, with the fortuitous aid of the industrial revolution, and now in the desperate and soulless squalor of modern town life the Gothic revivalists sought madly in one source after another the elusive doctrine which was to bring back Beauty into daily life.

The Gothic Revival is a strange and pathetic story of genuine but misguided enthusiasm which has left us an almost indestructible legacy of freakish ugliness and, what is worse, has imposed on us the dangerous belief in style architecture, for, when all the Gothic styles had been tried in turn, and when Waterhouse had even had a fling at Romanesque, the architects, in despair, began to run through the other possible styles and have turned with increasing rapidity from one to another like a feverish patient seeking a cool fresh place to lie on. Perhaps we are coming at last to the end of the disease which this tremendous epidemic has left in our social body. Mr. Kenneth Clark's book may even help on that wished for consummation.

ROGER FRY.

## THE TEXT OF SHAKESPEARE

**The Works of Shakespeare.** Edited by HERBERT FARJEON. Vol. I. (Nonesuch Press. £3 12s. 6d.)

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INSURANCE NOTES

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UNLIKE the majority of mutual life offices, this old Association—it was founded in 1840—is carried on mainly for the benefit of small insurers. During the past three years the average amount of the sum assured under new policies has been no more than £123, £110, and £108 respectively. But as an indication of the widespread nature of the Association's activities, it will be sufficient to state that the number of new policies issued in the same three years was nearly 60,000. It might be assumed that this class of business would be expensive to conduct, but the expense ratio compares favourably with other mutual life offices, and is even lower than those shown by some offices whose average policy is considerably higher. The explanation lies in the fact that the “Provident Mutual” adopts the plan of collecting premiums through the pay sheets of large groups of employees, chiefly railway workers, and thus eliminates the principal part of the cost which is inevitably associated with the collection of small premiums at frequent intervals.

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At the recent annual meeting the Chairman stated that the high profit-earning power experienced during the quinquennium 1923-1927 had been maintained in 1928. The Board therefore had no hesitation in deciding to continue the interim bonuses at the full rates last declared as above.

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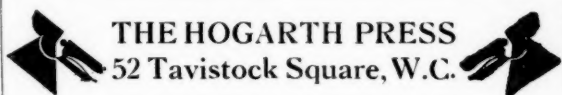
In December last the “Distinctive” system of Whole Life Assurance adopted by the Scottish Provident Institution was briefly described in this column. The features of this system are (1) very low premiums, and (2) the reservation of the surplus profits for those policy-holders who survive the period at the end of which their premiums, accumulated at 4 per cent. compound interest, equal the sum for which they are assured. It is now possible to complete the picture by adding the details of the distribution of the surplus disclosed at the Quinquennial Valuation made as at December 31st, 1928. In a preliminary announcement which we have received, it is stated that the following bonus additions have been made to the policies in force at the end of last year:—

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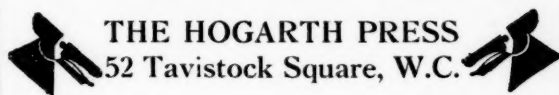
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## FINANCIAL SECTION

## THE WEEK IN THE CITY

## NEW YORK AND LONDON—INVESTMENT TRUSTS—FIRST CO-OPERATIVE—INVESTMENT CORPORATION OF CANADA

THE New York situation continues to absorb attention in the City. The stampede of the Wall Street bulls on Tuesday of last week, when call money touched 20 per cent., when 8,247,000 shares changed hands, and the ticker was two hours late, was arrested by the action of the National City Bank in offering \$25,000,000 in the call money market. Mr. Mitchell, the President of the National City, got into hot water for running counter to Federal Reserve policy, which is apparently to break down speculation at all costs, but Mr. Mitchell knew what he was doing—after all he offered his money at 15 per cent. to 20 per cent.—and, having narrowly averted a market panic, he now makes a strong plea in his Bank bulletin for a 6 per cent. Federal Reserve re-discount rate. The Wall Street bulls again took fright over the week-end, and general liquidation was resumed on Monday of this week, with call money up to 15 per cent. The secrecy which attends the sessions of the Court of the Bank of England or the directors' meetings of the "big five" banks in this country is unknown in America. Prominent bankers in New York and Washington constantly give interviews and as constantly contradict one another. The Governors of the Federal Reserve Board are now holding their semi-annual conferences at Washington, with newspaper reporters on their doorstep. The whole country is taking sides in the battle between the Reserve Banks and the speculators. Mr. C. W. Durant, the king of speculators, albeit a motor manufacturer in his spare time, has addressed a questionnaire to a hundred industrial leaders attacking the Federal Reserve policy and asking whether they believe Wall Street over-values their securities. A factor in the situation which is not to be ignored is the power of recently formed investment trust companies. These companies have been loaning their funds in the call money market and are ready to come into the stock market whenever prices reach an attractive level.

The London Stock Exchange is on the whole taking sides with the Federal Reserve authorities, and is frankly relieved to think that each successive break in Wall Street makes the possibility of a rise in our  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Bank rate more remote. The gilt-edged market this week has had its own particular problem—the paying of the £89 call on the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Treasury Bonds, 1932-34, issued at 99. This call has been responsible for the persistent selling of this stock by disappointed "stags" down to 3 discount, which in turn has depressed the market prices of all short-dated British funds. The  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Treasury Bonds, 1932-34, at 96 $\frac{3}{4}$ , to yield £5 7s. 6d. with redemption, seem particularly attractive in view of the option which they carry of conversion into 4 per cent. Consols in July at £112 Consols for £100 Treasury Bond. Apart from this feature the gilt-edged market failed to be impressed by Mr. Churchill's Budget surplus in view of his £7,400,000 raid on the Sinking Fund. It is a pity that Mr. Churchill is not free to advise Sir Hugo Hirst on how to raid shareholders whilst offering them bonuses. The General Electric affair has cropped up again, and Sir Hugo, unrepentant, has proposed a new scheme which is apparently as distasteful to American shareholders as the one before, namely, to offer the new shares at 42s. to all shareholders, but to force the foreigners to sell their rights "in a free market." Conversations between Sir Hugo Hirst and the American representatives are proceeding.

The increase in investment trust companies in the past three months has broken all previous records, the prospectus issues amounting to £11,269,500, and the issues to shareholders to £5,853,396, making a total of £17,122,896. The prospectus issues, fifteen in all, represented 18 per cent. of the total issues raised in the London market. These figures relate to companies which were strictly investment trusts and which for the most part were formed under

strong and highly reputable auspices: hence, they are cause for congratulation. It is far better for the small investor to take shares in soundly managed investment trust companies than to subscribe to speculative or patent trade issues, whose destination in nine cases out of ten is the financial rubbish heap. The latest investment trust has the distinction of being registered in Holland and having its share capital placed in Amsterdam and London by Messrs. Lippmann, Rosenthal and M. Samuel respectively. The English and Dutch Investment Trust Ltd. will operate on the usual trust lines, and will have a London Advisory Committee, but will be controlled in Holland, where taxation conditions are favourable to the building up of reserves (Dutch companies being liable to pay income tax only on dividends paid at the rate of 9.05 per cent.). The ordinary capital consists of twenty-five common shares, against which will be issued 200,000 participation certificates. The present issue consists of 50,000 5 per cent. 1st preference and 25,000 2nd preference shares of £1.100, the first class having one and the second class having two participation certificates attached. This form of issue—preference shares with equity warrants attached—was introduced into the investment trust world for the first time by the London Canadian Investment Corporation last year.

Investment trust companies formed under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act—shareholdings being limited to £200 and dividends being payable free of income tax—are designed to attract the small investor. We have on former occasions criticized the First Co-Operative Investment Trust Ltd. for having paid from the outset dividends at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum and for having failed in consequence to build up adequate reserves. The small investor above all wants security. The report of the First Co-Operative for the half-year ending January 31st, 1929, shows that in order to maintain its dividends at 7 per cent. and to pay its directors £5,063 for the half year it had to draw £6,500 from the dividend equalization reserve. The directors explain that they have decided to take into the revenue account a smaller proportion of the interest and dividends accrued than was taken formerly, which is the excuse for wiping out the dividend equalization reserve. It is satisfactory to read that instead of a depreciation as at July 31st, 1928, the market value of the investments showed an appreciation over their book value, but securities are still valued at middle market prices and unquoted securities on the directors' own valuation. It seems a pity that Mr. Emil Davies has not acted on the warning which he gave the shareholders last autumn by reducing the rate of dividend from 7 per cent. to 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. or 6 per cent. instead of distributing profits up to the hilt. At the end of the next half-year the investment reserve of £40,000 may yet again prove to be inadequate.

Dealings have begun in the \$100 5 per cent. Preferred shares of the Consolidated Investment Corporation of Canada at 21-21 $\frac{1}{2}$ , and at the moment of writing the price is 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ . We gave an account of this Canadian finance company in THE NATION of February 23rd, 1929. The Preferred shares carry non-detachable warrants, entitling the holder to receive free one common share for each preferred share. Additional warrants are attached giving the right to purchase up to 1934 additional common shares at \$30 per share in the proportion of one common for every two preferred. As the common shares are being dealt in at £3 10s. to £4, the preferred shares seem cheap at 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ . To place the Company in funds Messrs. Wood, Gundy purchased \$15,000,000 30-year  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Gold Bonds and \$10,000,000 preferred shares and 1,375,000 common shares of no par value for \$32,000,000 in cash. With \$17,000,000 cash behind them the preferred shares seem to be a well secured investment, apart from the attraction of having a share in the equity.

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